JOHN CHRISTOPHER

Volume 2
STORM AND STRESS

ROMAIN ROLLAND

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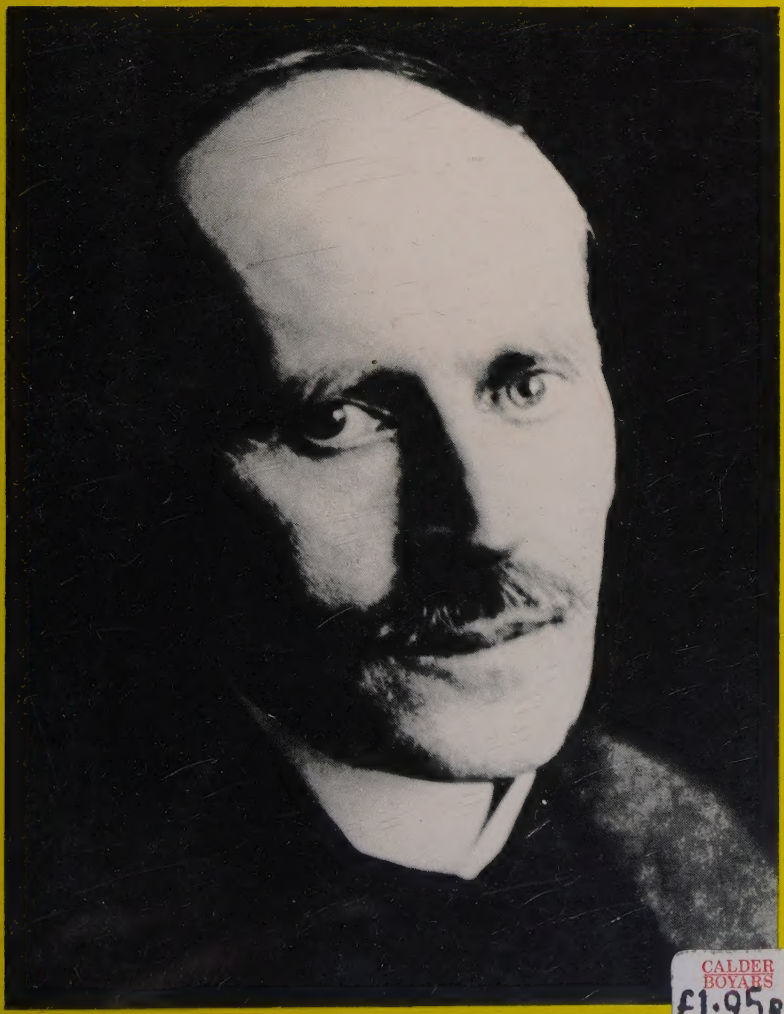

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JOHN CHRISTOPHER

II

STORM AND STRESS

JOHN CHRISTOPHER

ROMAIN ROLLAND

A Novel

STORM AND STRESS

Translated by
GILBERT CANNAN

A Jupiter Book

LONDON
CALDER AND BOYARS

First published in Great Britain 1910
and reissued 1961 by William Heinemann Ltd.
Published as a Calder and Boyars Jupiter Book 1966
by Calder and Boyars Ltd., 18 Brewer Street, London, W. 1
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"John Christopher" is published in four volumes with the following sub-titles:

DAWN AND MORNING
STORM AND STRESS
JOHN CHRISTOPHER IN PARIS
JOURNEY'S END

SET IN BORGIS BASKERVILLE-ANTIQUE
AND PRINTED IN PÖSSNECK BY
KARL-MARX-WERK

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Part III

YOUTH

Christofori faciem die quacunque tueris,
Illá nempe die non morte mala morieris.

I

THE HOUSE OF EULER

The house was plunged in silence. Since Melchior's death everything seemed dead. Now that his loud voice was stilled, from morning to night nothing was heard but the wearisome murmuring of the river.

Christopher hurled himself into his work. He took a fiercely angry pleasure in self-castigation for having wished to be happy. To expressions of sympathy and kind words he made no reply, but was proud and stiff. Without a word he went about his daily task and gave his lessons with icy politeness. His pupils who knew of his misfortune were shocked by his insensibility. But those who were older and had some experience of sorrow knew that this apparent coldness might, in a child, be used only to conceal suffering: and they pitied him. He was not grateful for their sympathy. Even music could bring him no comfort. He played without pleasure, and as a duty. It was as though he found a cruel joy in no longer taking pleasure in anything, or in persuading himself that he did not: in depriving himself of every reason for living, and yet going on.

His two brothers, terrified by the silence of the house of death, ran away from it as quickly as possible. Rodolphe went into the office of his uncle Theodore and lived with him, and Ernst, after trying two or three trades, found work on one of the Rhine steamers plying between Mainz and Cologne, and he used to come back only when he wanted money. Christopher was left alone with his mother in the house, which was too large for them; and the meagreness of their resources, and the payment of certain debts which had been discovered after his father's death, forced them, whatever pain it might cost, to seek another more lowly and less expensive dwelling.

They found a little flat—two or three rooms on the second floor of a house in the Market Street. It was a noisy district in the middle of the town, far from the river, far from the trees, far from the country and all the familiar places. But they had to consult reason, not sentiment, and Christopher found in it a fine opportunity for gratifying his bitter creed

of self-mortification. Besides, the owner of the house, old registrar Euler, was a friend of his grandfather, and knew the family: that was enough for Louisa, who was lost in her empty house, and was irresistibly drawn towards those who had known the creatures whom she had loved.

They got ready to leave. They took long draughts of the bitter melancholy of the last days passed by the sad, beloved fireside that was to be left for ever. They dared hardly tell their sorrow: they were ashamed of it, or afraid. Both thought that they ought not to show their weakness to each other. At table, sitting alone in a dark room with half-closed shutters, they dared not raise their voices: they ate hurriedly and did not look at each other for fear of not being able to conceal their trouble. They parted as soon as they had finished. Christopher went back to his work; but as soon as he was free for a moment, he would come back, go stealthily home, and creep on tiptoe to his room or to the attic. Then he would shut the door, sit down in a corner on an old trunk or on the window-ledge, or stay there without thinking, letting the indefinable buzzing and humming of the old house, which trembled with the lightest tread, thrill through him. His heart would tremble with it. He would listen anxiously for the faintest breath in or out of doors, for the creaking of floors, for all the imperceptible familiar noises: he knew them all. He would lose consciousness, his thoughts would be filled with the images of the past, and he would issue from his stupor only at the sound of Saint Martin's clock, reminding him that it was time to go.

In the room below him he could hear Louisa's footsteps passing softly to and fro, then for hours she could not be heard; she made no noise. Christopher would listen intently. He would go down, a little uneasy, as one is for a long time after a great misfortune. He would push the door ajar; Louisa would turn her back on him; she would be sitting in front of a cupboard in the midst of a heap of things—rags, old belongings, odd garments, treasures, which she had brought out intending to sort them. But she had not strength for it; everything reminded her of something; she would turn and turn it in her hands and begin to dream; it would drop from her hands; she would stay for hours together with her arms hanging down, lying back exhausted in a chair, given up to a stupor of sorrow.

Poor Louisa was now spending most of her life in the past—that sad past, which had been very niggardly of joy for her; but she was so used to suffering that she was still grateful for the least tenderness shown to her, and the pale lights, which had shone here and there in the drab days of her life, were still enough to make them bright. All the evil that Melchior had done her was forgotten; she remembered only the good. Her marriage had been the great romance of her life. If Melchior had been drawn into it by a caprice, of which he had quickly repented, she had given herself with her whole heart; she thought that she was loved as much as she had loved; and to Melchior she was ever most tenderly grateful. She did not try to understand what he had become in consequence. Incapable of seeing reality as it is, she only knew how to bear it as it is, humbly and honestly, as a woman who has no need of understanding life in order to be able to live. What she could not explain, she left to God for explanation. In her singular piety, she put upon God the responsibility for all the injustice that she had suffered at the hands of Melchior and the others, and only visited them with the good that they had given her. And so her life of misery had left her with no bitter memory. She only felt worn out—weak as she was—by those years of privation and fatigue. And now that Melchior was no longer there, now that two of her sons were gone from their home, and the third seemed to be able to do without her, she had lost all heart for action; she was tired, sleepy; her will was stupefied. She was going through one of those crises of neurasthenia which often come upon active and industrious people in the decline of life, when some unforeseen event deprives them of every reason for living. She had not the heart even to finish the stocking she was knitting, to tidy the drawer in which she was looking, to get up to shut the window; she would sit there, without a thought, without strength—save for recollection. She was conscious of her collapse, and was ashamed of it or blushed for it; she tried to hide it from her son; and Christopher, wrapped up in the egotism of his own grief, never noticed it. No doubt he was often secretly impatient with his mother's slowness in speaking, and acting, and doing the smallest thing; but different though her ways were from her usual activity, he never gave a thought to the matter until then.

Suddenly on that day it came home to him for the first time

when he surprised her in the midst of her rags, turned out on the floor, heaped up at her feet, in her arms, and in her lap. Her neck was drawn out, her head was bowed, her face was stiff and rigid. When she heard him come in she started; her white cheeks were suffused with red; with a instinctive movement she tried to hide the things she was holding, and muttered with an awkward smile:

"You see, I was sorting . . ."

The sight of the poor soul stranded among the relics of the past cut to his heart, and he was filled with pity. But he spoke with a bitter asperity and seemed to scold, to drag her from her apathy:

"Come, come, mother; you must not stay there, in the middle of all that dust, with the room all shut up! It is not good for you. You must pull yourself together, and have done with all this."

"Yes," said she meekly.

She tried to get up to put the things back in the drawer. But she sat down again at once and listlessly let them fall from her hands.

"Oh! I can't . . . I can't," she moaned. "I shall never finish!"

He was frightened. He leaned over her. He caressed her forehead with his hands.

"Come, mother, what is it?" he said. "Shall I help you? Are you ill?"

She did not answer. She gave a sort of stifled sob. He took her hands, and knelt down by her side, the better to see her in the dusky room.

"Mother!" he said anxiously.

Louisa laid her head on his shoulder and burst into tears.

"My boy, my boy," she cried, holding close to him. "My boy! . . . You will not leave me? Promise me that you will not leave me?"

His heart was torn with pity.

"No, mother, no. I will not leave you. What made you think of such a thing?"

"I am so unhappy! They have all left me, all. . . ."

She pointed to the things all about her, and he did not know whether she was speaking of them or of her sons and the dead.

"You will stay with me? You will not leave me? . . . What should I do, if you went too?"

"I will not go, I tell you; we will stay together. Don't cry. I promise."

She went on weeping. She could not stop herself. He dried her eyes with his handkerchief.

"What is it, mother dear? Are you in pain?"

"I don't know; I don't know what it is." She tried to calm herself and to smile.

"I do try to be sensible. I do. But just nothing at all makes me cry.... You see, I'm doing it again.... Forgive me. I am so stupid. I am old. I have no strength left. I have no taste for anything any more. I am no good for anything. I wish I were buried with all the rest...."

He held her to him, close, like a child.

"Don't worry, mother; be calm; don't think about it...."

Gradually she grew quiet.

"It is foolish. I am ashamed.... But what is it? What is it?"

She who had always worked so hard could not understand why her strength had suddenly snapped, and she was humiliated to the very depths of her being. He pretended not to see it.

"A little weariness, mother," he said, trying to speak carelessly. "It is nothing; you will see; it is nothing."

But he too was anxious. From his childhood he had been accustomed to see her brave, resigned, withstanding every test in silence. And he was astonished to see her suddenly broken: he was afraid.

He helped her to sort the things scattered on the floor. Every now and then she would linger over something, but he would gently take it from her hands, and she let him.

From that time on he took pains to be more with her. As soon as he had finished his work, instead of shutting himself up in his room as he loved to do, he would return to her. He felt her loneliness and that she was not strong enough to be left alone: there was danger in leaving her alone.

He would sit by her side in the evening near the open window looking on to the road. The view would slowly disappear. The people were returning home. Little lights appeared in the houses far off. They had seen it all a thousand times. But soon they would see it no more. They would talk disjointedly. They would point out to each other the smallest of the familiar incidents and expectations of the evening,

always with fresh interest. They would have long intimate silences, or Louisa, for no apparent reason, would tell some reminiscence, some disconnected story that passed through her mind. Her tongue was loosed a little now that she felt that she was with one who loved her. She tried hard to talk. It was difficult for her, for she had grown used to living apart from her family; she looked upon her sons and her husband as too clever to talk to her, and she had never dared to join in their conversation. Christopher's tender care was a new thing to her and infinitely sweet, though it made her afraid. She deliberated over her words; she found it difficult to express herself; her sentences were left unfinished and obscure. Sometimes she was ashamed of what she was saying; she would look at her son, and stop in the middle of her narrative. But he would press her hand, and she would be reassured. He was filled with love and pity for the childish, motherly creature, to whom he had turned when he was a child, and now she turned to him for support. And he took a melancholy pleasure in her prattle, that had no interest for anybody but herself, in her trivial memories of a life that had always been joyless and mediocre, though it seemed to Louisa to be of infinite worth. Sometimes he would try to interrupt her; he was afraid that her memories would make her sadder than ever, and he would urge her to sleep. She would understand what he was at, and would say with gratitude in her eyes:

"No. I assure you, it does one good; let us stay a little longer."

They would stay until the night was far gone and the neighbours were in bed. Then they would say good night, she a little comforted by being rid of some of her trouble, he with a heavy heart under this new burden added to that which he already had to bear.

The day came for their departure. On the night before they stayed longer than usual in the unlighted room. They did not speak. Every now and then Louisa moaned: "Dear God! Dear God!" Christopher tried to keep her attention fixed on the thousand details of the morrow's removal. She would not go to bed until he gently compelled her. But when he went up to his room he did not go to bed for a long time. Leaning out of the window, he tried to gaze through the darkness, to see

for the last time the moving shadows of the river beneath the house. He heard the wind in the tall trees in Minna's garden. The sky was black. There was no one in the street. A cold rain was just falling. The weathercocks creaked. In a house near by a child was crying. The night weighed with an overwhelming heaviness upon the earth and upon his soul. The dull chiming of the hours, the cracked note of the halves and quarters, dropped one after another into the grim silence, broken only by the sound of the rain on the roofs and the cobbles.

When Christopher at last made up his mind to go to bed, chilled in body and soul, he heard the window below him shut. And, as he lay, he thought sadly that it is cruel for the poor to dwell on the past, for they have no right to have a past, like the rich: they have no home, no corner of the earth in which to house their memories: their joys, their sorrows, all their days, are scattered in the wind.

Next day in beating rain they moved their scanty furniture to their new dwelling. Fischer, the old furniture dealer, lent them a cart and a pony; he came and loaded them himself. But they could not take everything, for the rooms to which they were going were much smaller than the old. Christopher had to make his mother leave the oldest and most useless of their belongings. It was not altogether easy; the least thing had its worth for her: a shaky table, a broken chair, she wished to leave nothing behind. Fischer, fortified by the authority of his old friendship with Jean Michel, had to join Christopher in complaining, and, good fellow that he was and understanding her grief, had even to promise to keep some of her precious rubbish for her against the day when she should want it again. Then she agreed to tear herself away.

The two brothers had been told of the removal, but Ernst came on the night before to say that he could not be there, and Rodolphe appeared for a moment about noon; he watched them load the furniture, gave some advice, and went away again looking mightily busy.

The procession set out through the muddy streets. Christopher led the horse, which slipped on the greasy cobbles. Louisa walked by her son's side, and tried to shelter him from the rain. And so they had a melancholy home-coming to the damp rooms, that were made darker than ever by the dull light

coming from the lowering sky. They could not have fought against the depression that was upon them had it not been for the attentions of their landlord and his family. But, when the cart had driven away, as night fell, leaving the furniture heaped up in the room, and Christopher and Louisa were sitting, worn out, one on a box, the other on a sack, they heard a little dry cough on the staircase; there was a knock at the door. Old Euler came in. He begged pardon elaborately for disturbing his guests, and said that by way of celebrating their first evening he hoped that they would be kind enough to eat with himself and his family. Louisa, stunned by her sorrow, wished to refuse. Christopher was not much more tempted than she by this friendly gathering, but the old man insisted and Christopher, thinking that it would be better for his mother not to spend their first evening in their new home alone with her thoughts, made her accept.

They went down to the floor below, where they found the whole family collected: the old man, his daughter, his son-in-law, Vogel, and his grandchildren, a boy and a girl, both a little younger than Christopher. They clustered around their guests, bade them welcome, asked if they were tired, if they were pleased with their rooms, if they needed anything; putting so many questions that Christopher in bewilderment could make nothing of them, for everybody spoke at once. The soup was placed on the table; they sat down. But the noise went on. Amalia, Euler's daughter, had set herself at once to acquaint Louisa with local details: with the topography of the district, the habits and advantages of the house, the time when the milkman called, the time when she got up, the various tradespeople and the prices that she paid. She did not stop until she had explained everything. Louisa, half-asleep, tried hard to take an interest in the information, but the remarks which she ventured showed that she had understood not a word, and provoked Amalia to indignant exclamation and repetition of every detail. Old Euler, a clerk, tried to explain to Christopher the difficulties of a musical career. Christopher's other neighbour, Rosa, Amalia's daughter, never stopped talking from the moment when they sat down—so volubly that she had no time to breathe; she lost her breath in the middle of a sentence, but at once she was off again. Vogel was gloomy and complained of the food, and there were

embittered arguments on the subject. Amalia, Euler, the girl, left off talking to take part in the discussion; and there were endless controversies as to whether there was too much salt in the stew or not enough; they called each other to witness, and, naturally, no two opinions were the same. Each despised his neighbour's taste, and thought only his own healthy and reasonable. They might have gone on arguing until the Last Judgement.

But, in the end, they all joined in deploring the bad weather. They all commiserated with Louisa and Christopher upon their troubles, and in terms which moved him greatly they praised him for his courageous conduct. They took great pleasure in recalling not only the misfortunes of their guests, but also their own, and those of their friends and all their acquaintance, and they all agreed that the good are always unhappy, and that there is joy only for the selfish and dishonest. They decided that life is sad, that it is quite useless, and that they were all better dead, were it not the indubitable will of God that they should go on living so as to suffer. As these ideas came very near to Christopher's actual pessimism, he thought the better of his landlord, and closed his eyes to their little oddities.

When he went upstairs again with his mother to the disordered rooms, they were weary and sad, but they felt a little less lonely; and while Christopher lay awake through the night, for he could not sleep because of his weariness and the noise of the neighbourhood, and listened to the heavy carts shaking the walls, and the breathing of the family sleeping below, he tried to persuade himself that he would be, if not happy, at least less unhappy here, with these good people—a little tiresome, if the truth be told—who suffered from like misfortunes, who seemed to understand him, and whom he thought he understood.

But when at last he did fall asleep, he was roused unpleasantly at dawn by the voices of his neighbours arguing, and the creaking of a pump worked furiously by someone who was in a hurry to swill the yard and the stairs.

Justus Euler was a little bent old man, with uneasy, gloomy eyes, a red face, all lines and pimples, gap-toothed, with an unkempt beard, with which he was for ever fidgeting with his

hands. Very honest, quite able, profoundly moral, he had been on quite good terms with Christopher's grandfather. He was said to be like him. And, in truth, he was of the same generation and brought up with the same principles; but he lacked Jean Michel's strong physique, that is, while he was of the same opinion on many points, fundamentally he was hardly at all like him, for it is temperament far more than ideas that makes a man, and whatever the divisions, fictitious or real, marked between men by intellect, the great division between men and men is into those who are healthy and those who are not. Old Euler was not a healthy man. He talked morality, like Jean Michel, but his morals were not the same as Jean Michel's; he had not his sound stomach, his lungs, or his jovial strength. Everything in Euler and his family was built on a more parsimonious and niggardly plan. He had been an official for forty years, was now retired, and suffered from that melancholy that comes from inactivity and weighs so heavily upon old men, who have not made provision in their inner life for their last years. All his habits, natural and acquired, all the habits of his trade had given him a meticulous and peevish quality, which was reproduced to a certain extent in each of his children.

His son-in-law, Vogel, a clerk at the Chancery Court, was fifty years old. Tall, strong, almost bald, with gold spectacles, fairly good-looking, he considered himself ill, and no doubt was so, although obviously he did not have the diseases which he thought he had, but only a mind soured by the stupidity of his calling and a body ruined to a certain extent by his sedentary life. Very industrious, not without merit, even cultured up to a point, he was a victim of our ridiculous modern life, or like so many clerks, locked up in their offices, he had succumbed to the demon of hypochondria. One of those unfortunates whom Goethe called "*ein trauriger ungriechischer Hypochondrist*"—"a gloomy and un-Greek hypochondriac"—and pitied, though he took good care to avoid them.

Amalia was neither the one nor the other. Strong, loud, and active, she wasted no sympathy on her husband's jeremiads; she used to shake him roughly. But no human strength can bear up against living together, and when in a household one or other is neurasthenic, the chances are that in time they will both be so. In vain did Amalia cry out at Vogel, in vain

did she go on protesting either from habit or because it was necessary; next moment she herself was lamenting her condition more loudly even than he, and, passing imperceptibly from scolding to lamentation, she did him no good; she increased his ills tenfold by loudly singing chorus to his follies. In the end not only did she crush the unhappy Vogel, terrified by the proportions assumed by his own outcries sent sounding back by this echo, but she crushed everybody, even herself. In her turn she caught the trick of unwarrantably bemoaning her health, and her father's, and her daughter's, and her son's. It became a mania; by constant repetition she came to believe what she said. She took the least chill tragically; she was uneasy and worried about everybody. More than that, when they were well, she still worried, because of the sickness that was bound to come. So life was passed in perpetual fear. Outside that they were all in fairly good health, and it seemed as though their state of continual moaning and groaning did serve to keep them well. They all ate and slept and worked as usual, and the life of this household was not relaxed for it all. Amalia's activity was not satisfied with working from morning to night up and down the house; they all had to toil with her, and there was for ever a moving of furniture, a washing of windows, a polishing of floors, a sound of voices, footsteps, quivering, movement.

The two children, crushed by such loud authority, leaving nobody alone, seemed to find it natural enough to submit to it. The boy, Leonard, was good-looking, though insignificant of feature, and stiff in manner. The girl, Rosa, fair-haired, with pretty blue eyes, gentle and affectionate, would have been pleasing especially with the freshness of her delicate complexion, and her kind manner, had her nose not been quite so large or so awkwardly placed; it made her face heavy and gave her a foolish expression. She was like a girl of Holbein, in the gallery at Basle—the daughter of Burgomaster Meier—sitting, with eyes cast down, her hands on her knees, her fair hair falling down to her shoulders, looking embarrassed and ashamed of her uncomely nose. But so far Rosa had not been troubled by it, and it never had broken in upon her inexhaustible chatter. Always her shrill voice was heard in the house telling stories, always breathless, as though she had no time to say everything, always excited and animated, in spite of

the protests which she drew from her mother, her father, and even her grandfather, exasperated, not so much because she was for ever talking as because she prevented them talking themselves. For these good people, kind, loyal, devoted—the very cream of good people—had almost all the virtues, but they lacked one virtue which is capital, and is the charm of life: the virtue of silence.

Christopher was in tolerant mood. His sorrow had softened his intolerant and emphatic temper. His experience of the cruel indifference of the elegant made him more conscious of the worth of these honest folk, graceless, and devilish tiresome, who had yet an austere conception of life, and because they lived joylessly, seemed to him to live without weakness. Having decided that they were excellent, and that he ought to like them, like the German that he was, he tried to persuade himself that he did in fact like them. But he did not succeed; he lacked that easy Germanic idealism, which does not wish to see, and does not see, what would be displeasing to its sight, for fear of disturbing the very proper tranquillity of its judgement and the pleasantness of its existence. On the contrary, he never was so conscious of the defects of these people as when he loved them, when he wanted to love them absolutely without reservation; it was a sort of unconscious loyalty, and an inexorable demand for truth, which, in spite of himself, made him more clear-sighted, and more exacting, with what was dearest to him. And it was not long before he began to be irritated by the oddities of the family. They made no attempt to conceal them. Contrary to the usual habit they displayed every intolerable quality they possessed, and all the good in them was hidden. So Christopher told himself, for he judged himself to have been unjust, and tried to surmount his first impressions, and to discover in them the excellent qualities which they so carefully concealed.

He tried to converse with old Justus Euler, who asked nothing better. He had a secret sympathy with him, remembering that his grandfather had liked to praise him. But good old Jean Michel had more of the pleasant faculty of deceiving himself about his friends than Christopher, and Christopher soon saw that. In vain did he try to accept Euler's memories of his grandfather. He could only get from him a discoloured caricature of Jean Michel, and scraps of talk that were

utterly uninteresting. Euler's stories used invariably to begin with:

"As I used to say to your poor grandfather . . ." He could remember nothing else. He had heard only what he had said himself.

Perhaps Jean Michel used only to listen in the same way. Most friendships are little more than arrangements for mutual satisfaction, so that each party may talk about himself to the other. But at least Jean Michel, however naïvely he used to give himself up to the delight of talking, had sympathy which he was always ready to lavish on all sides. He was interested in everything; he always regretted that he was no longer fifteen, so as to be able to see the marvellous inventions of the new generations, and to share their thoughts. He had the quality, perhaps the most precious in life, a curiosity always fresh, never changing with the years, born anew every morning. He had not the talent to turn this gift to account; but how many men of talent might envy him! Most men die at twenty or thirty; thereafter they are only reflections of themselves: for the rest of their lives they are aping themselves, repeating from day to day more and more mechanically and affectedly what they said and did and thought and loved when they were alive.

It was so long since old Euler had been alive, and he had been such a small thing then, that what was left of him now was very poor and rather ridiculous. Outside his former trade and his family life he knew nothing, and wished to know nothing. On every subject he had ideas ready-made, dating from his youth. He pretended to some knowledge of the arts, but he clung to certain hallowed names of men, about whom he was for ever reiterating his emphatic formulæ: everything else was naught and had never been. When modern interests were mentioned he would not listen, and talked of something else. He declared that he loved music passionately, and he would ask Christopher to play. But as soon as Christopher, who had been caught once or twice, began to play, the old fellow would begin to talk loudly to his daughter-in-law, as though the music only increased his interest in everything but music. Christopher would get up exasperated in the middle of his piece; no one would notice it. There were only a few old airs—three or four—some very beautiful, others very ugly,

but all equally sacred, which were privileged to gain comparative silence and absolute approval. With the very first notes the old man would go into ecstasies, tears would come to his eyes, not so much for the pleasure he was enjoying as for the pleasure which once he had enjoyed. In the end Christopher had a horror of these airs, though some of them, like the *Adelaïde* of Beethoven, were very dear to him: the old man was always humming the first bars of them, and never failed to declare, "There, that is music," contemptuously comparing it with "all the blessed modern music, in which there is no melody." Truth to tell, he knew nothing whatever about it.

His son-in-law was better educated and kept in touch with artistic movements; but that was even worse, for in his judgement there was always a disparaging tinge. But he was lacking neither in taste nor intelligence; but he could not bring himself to admire anything modern. He would have disparaged Mozart and Beethoven, if they had been contemporary, just as he would have acknowledged the merits of Wagner and Richard Strauss had they been dead for a century. His discontented temper refused to allow that there might be great men living during his own lifetime; the idea was distasteful to him. He was so embittered by his wasted life that he insisted on pretending that every life was wasted, that it could not be otherwise, and that those who thought the opposite, or pretended to think so, were one of two things: fools or humbugs.

And so he never spoke of any new celebrity except in a tone of bitter irony, and as he was not stupid he never failed to discover at the first glance the weak or ridiculous side of them. Any new name roused him to distrust; before he knew anything about the man he was inclined to criticise him—because he knew nothing about him. If he was sympathetic towards Christopher it was because he thought that the misanthropic boy found life as evil as he did himself, and that he was not a genius. Nothing so unites the small of soul in their suffering and discontent as the statement of their common impotence. Nothing so much restores the desire for health or life to those who are healthy and made for the joy of life as contact with the stupid pessimism of the mediocre and the sick, who, because they are not happy, deny the happiness of others. Christopher felt this. And yet these gloomy thoughts were familiar to him; but he was surprised to find them on Vogel's

lips, where they were unrecognisable; more than that, they were repugnant to him; they offended him.

He was even more in revolt against Amalia's ways. The good creature did no more than practise Christopher's theories of duty. The word was upon her lips at every turn. She worked unceasingly, and wanted everybody to work as she did. Her work was never directed towards making herself and others happier; on the contrary. It almost seemed as though it was mainly intended to incommode everybody and to make life as disagreeable as possible so as to sanctify it. Nothing would induce her for a moment to relinquish her holy duties in the household, that sacrosanct institution which in so many women takes the place of all other duties, social and moral. She would have thought herself lost had she not on the same day, at the same time, polished the wooden floors, cleaned the windows, polished the door-handles, beaten the carpets, moved the chairs, the cupboards, the tables. She was ostentatious about it. It was as though it was a point of honour with her. And after all, is it not in much the same spirit that many women conceive and defend their honour? It is a sort of piece of furniture which they have to keep polished, a well-waxed floor, cold, hard—and slippery.

The accomplishment of her task did not make Frau Vogel more amicable. She sacrificed herself to the trivialities of the household, as to a duty imposed by God. And she despised those who did not do as she did, those who rested, and were able to enjoy life a little in the intervals of work. She would go and rouse Louisa in her room when from time to time she sat down in the middle of her work to dream. Louisa would sigh, but she submitted to it with a half-ashamed smile. Fortunately, Christopher knew nothing about it; Amalia used to wait until he had gone out before she made these irruptions into their rooms, and so far she had not directly attacked him; he would not have put up with it. When he was with her he was conscious of a latent hostility within himself. What he could least forgive her was the noise she made. He was maddened by it. When he was locked in his room—a little low room looking out on the yard—with the window hermetically sealed, in spite of the want of air, so as not to hear the clatter in the house, he could not escape from it. Involuntarily he was

forced to listen attentively for the least sound coming up from below, and when the terrible voice which penetrated all the walls broke out again after a moment of silence he was filled with rage; he would shout, stamp with his foot, and roar insults at her through the wall. In the general uproar, no one ever noticed it; they thought he was composing. He would consign Frau Vogel to the depths of hell. He had no respect for her, nor esteem to check him. At such times it seemed to him that he would have preferred the loosest and most stupid of women, if only she did not talk, to cleverness, honesty, all the virtues, when they make too much noise.

His hatred of noise brought him in touch with Leonard. In the midst of the general excitement the boy was the only one to keep calm, and never to raise his voice more at one moment than another. He always expressed himself correctly and deliberately, choosing his words, and never hurrying. Amalia, simmering, never had patience to wait until he had finished; the whole family cried out upon his slowness. He did not worry about it. Nothing could upset his calm, respectful deference. Christopher was the more attracted to him when he learned that Leonard intended to devote his life to the Church, and his curiosity was roused.

With regard to religion, Christopher was in a queer position; he did not know himself how he stood towards it. He had never had time to think seriously about it. He was not well enough educated, and he was too much absorbed by the difficulties of existence to be able to analyse himself and to set his ideas in order. His violence led him from one extreme to the other, from absolute faith to complete negation, without troubling to find out whether in either case he agreed with himself. When he was happy he hardly thought of God at all, but he was quite ready to believe in Him. When he was unhappy he thought of Him, but did not believe; it seemed to him impossible that a God could authorise unhappiness and injustice. But these difficulties did not greatly exercise him. He was too fundamentally religious to think much about God. He lived in God; he had no need to believe in Him. That is well enough for the weak and worn, for those whose lives are anæmic. They aspire to God, as a plant does to the sun. The dying cling to life. But he who bears in his soul the sun and life, what need has he to seek them outside himself?

Christopher would probably never have bothered about these questions had he lived alone. But the obligations of social life forced him to bring his thoughts to bear on these puerile and useless problems, which occupy a place out of all proportion in the world; it is impossible not to take them into account since at every step they are in the way. As if a healthy, generous creature, overflowing with strength and love, had not a thousand more worthy things to do than to worry as to whether God exists or not! ... If it were only a question of believing in God! But it is needful to believe in *a* God, of whatever shape or size and colour and race. So far Christopher never gave a thought to the matter. Jesus hardly occupied his thoughts at all. It was not that he did not love Him: he loved Him when he thought of Him: but he never thought of Him. Sometimes he reproached himself for it, was angry with himself, could not understand why he did not take more interest in Him. And yet he professed, all his family professed; his grandfather was for ever reading the Bible; he went regularly to Mass; he served it in a sort of way, for he was an organist; and he set about his task conscientiously and in an exemplary manner. But when he left the church he would have been hard put to it to say what he had been thinking about. He set himself to read the Holy Books in order to fix his ideas, and he found amusement and even pleasure in them, just as in any beautiful strange books, not essentially different from other books, which no one ever thinks of calling sacred. In truth, if Jesus appealed to him, Beethoven did no less. And at his organ in Saint Florian's Church, when he accompanied on Sundays, he was more taken up with his organ than with Mass, and he was more religious when he played Bach than when he played Mendelssohn. Some of the ritual brought him to a fervour of exaltation. But did he then love God, or was it only the music, as an impudent priest said to him one day in jest, without thinking of the unhappiness which his quip might cause in him? Anybody else would not have paid any attention to it, and would not have changed his mode of living—(so many people put up with not knowing what they think!) But Christopher was cursed with an awkward need for sincerity, which filled him with scruples at every turn. And when scruples came to him they possessed him for ever. He tortured himself; he thought that he had acted with duplicity. Did he believe or

did he not? ... He had no means, material or intellectual—(knowledge and leisure are necessary)—of solving the problem by himself. And yet, it had to be solved, or he was either indifferent or a hypocrite. Now, he was incapable of being either one or the other.

He tried timidly to sound those about him. They all seemed to be sure of themselves. Christopher burned to know their reasons. He could not discover them. Hardly did he receive a definite answer; they always talked obliquely. Some thought him arrogant, and said that there is no arguing these things, that thousands of men cleverer and better than himself had believed without argument, and that he needed only to do as they had done. There were some who were a little hurt, as though it were a personal affront to ask them such a question, and yet they were of all perhaps the least certain of their facts. Others shrugged their shoulders and said with a smile: "Bah! it can't do any harm." And their smile said: "And it is so useful! ..." Christopher despised them with all his heart.

He had tried to lay his uncertainties before a priest, but he was discouraged by the experiment. He could not discuss the matter seriously with him. Though his interlocutor was quite pleasant, he made Christopher feel, quite politely, that there was no real equality between them; he seemed to assume in advance that his superiority was beyond dispute, and that the discussion could not exceed the limits which he laid down for it, without a kind of impropriety; it was just a fencing bout, and was quite inoffensive. When Christopher wished to exceed the limits and to ask questions, which the worthy man was pleased not to answer, he stepped back with a patronising smile, and a few Latin quotations, and a fatherly objurgation to pray, pray that God would enlighten him. Christopher issued from the interview humiliated and wounded by his look of polite superiority. Wrong or right, he would never again for anything in the world have recourse to a priest. He admitted that these men were his superiors in intelligence or by reason of their sacred calling; but in argument there is neither superiority, nor inferiority, nor title, nor age, nor name; nothing is of worth but truth, before which all men are equal.

So he was glad to find a boy of his own age who believed. He asked no more than belief, and he hoped that Leonard would give him good reason for believing. He made advances

to him. Leonard replied with his usual gentleness, but without eagerness; he was never eager about anything. As they could not carry on a long conversation in the house without being interrupted every moment by Amalia or the old man, Christopher proposed that they should go for a walk one evening after dinner. Leonard was too polite to refuse, although he would gladly have got out of it, for his indolent nature disliked walking, talking, and anything that cost him an effort.

Christopher had some difficulty in opening up the conversation. After two or three awkward sentence about trivialities he plunged with a brusqueness that was almost brutal. He asked Leonard if he were really going to be a priest, and if he liked the idea. Leonard was nonplussed, and looked at him uneasily, but when he saw that Christopher was not hostilely disposed he was reassured.

"Yes," he replied. "How could it be otherwise?"

"Ah!" said Christopher. "You are very happy." Leonard was conscious of a shade of envy in Christopher's voice and was agreeably flattered by it. He altered his manner, became expansive, his face brightened.

"Yes," he said, "I am happy." He beamed.

"What do you do to be so?" asked Christopher.

Before replying Leonard proposed that they should sit down on a quiet seat in the cloisters of Saint Martin's. From there they could see a corner of the little square, planted with acacias, and beyond it the town, the country, bathed in the evening mists. The Rhine flowed at the foot of the hill. An old deserted cemetery, with graves lost under the rich grass, lay in slumber beside them behind the closed gates.

Leonard began to talk. He said, with his eyes shining with contentment, how happy he was to escape from life, to have found a refuge, where a man is, and for ever will be, in shelter. Christopher, still sore from his wounds, felt passionately the desire for rest and forgetfulness; but it was mingled with regret. He asked with a sigh:

"And yet, does it cost you nothing to renounce life altogether?"

"Oh!" said Leonard quietly. "What is there to regret? Isn't life sad and ugly?"

"There are lovely things too," said Christopher, looking at the beautiful evening.

"There are some beautiful things, but very few."

"The few that there are are yet many to me."

"Oh, well! it is simply a matter of common sense. On the one hand a little good and much evil; on the other neither good nor evil on earth, and after, infinite happiness—how can one hesitate?"

Christopher was not very pleased with this sort of arithmetic. So economic a life seemed to him very poor. But he tried to persuade himself that it was wisdom.

"So," he asked a little ironically, "there is no risk of your being seduced by an hour's pleasure?"

"How foolish! When you know that it is only an hour, and that after it there is all eternity!"

"You are quite certain of eternity?"

"Of course."

Christopher questioned him. He was thrilled with hope and desire. Perhaps Leonard would at last give him impregnable reasons for believing. With what a passion he would himself renounce all the world to follow him to God.

At first Leonard, proud of his rôle of apostle, and convinced that Christopher's doubts were only a matter of form, and that they would of course give way before his first arguments, relied upon the Holy Books, the authority of the Gospel, the miracles, and traditions. But he began to grow gloomy when, after Christopher had listened for a few minutes, he stopped him and said that he was answering questions with questions, and that he had not asked him to tell exactly what it was that he was doubting, but to give some means of resolving his doubts. Leonard then had to realise that Christopher was much more ill than he seemed, and that he would only allow himself to be convinced by the light of reason. But he still thought that Christopher was playing the free thinker (it never occurred to him that he might be so sincerely). He was not discouraged, and, strong in his recently acquired knowledge, he turned back to his school learning: he unfolded higgledy-piggledy, with more authority than order, his metaphysical proofs of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. Christopher, with his mind at stretch, and his brow knit in the effort, laboured in silence, and made him say it all over again; tried hard to gather the meaning, and to take it to himself, and to follow the reasoning. Then suddenly he

burst out, vowed that Leonard was laughing at him, that it was all tricks, jests of the fine talkers who forged words and then amused themselves with pretending that these words were things. Leonard was nettled, and guaranteed the good faith of his authors. Christopher shrugged his shoulders, and said with an oath that they were only humbugs, infernal writers; and he demanded fresh proof.

Leonard perceived to his horror that Christopher was incurably attainted, and took no more interest in him. He remembered that he had been told not to waste his time in arguing with sceptics—at least when they stubbornly refuse to believe. There was the risk of being shaken himself, without profiting the other. It was better to leave the unfortunate fellow to the will of God, who, if He so designs, would see to it that the sceptic was enlightened: or if not, who would dare to go against the will of God? Leonard did not insist then on carrying on the discussion. He only said gently that for the time being there was nothing to be done, that no reasoning could show the way to a man who was determined not to see it, and that Christopher must pray and appeal to Grace: nothing is possible without that: he must desire grace. and the will to believe.

"The will," thought Christopher bitterly. "So then, God will exist because I will Him to exist? So then, death will not exist, because it pleases me to deny it? ... Alas! How easy life is to those who have no need to see the truth, to those who can see what they wish to see, and are for ever forging pleasant dreams in which softly to sleep!" In such a bed, Christopher knew well that he would never sleep....

Leonard went on talking. He had fallen back on his favourite subject, the sweets of the contemplative life, and, once on this neutral ground, he was inexhaustible. In his monotonous voice, that shook with the pleasure in him, he told of the joys of the life in God, outside, above the world, far from noise, of which he spoke in a sudden tone of hatred (he desteted it almost as much as Christopher), far from violence, far from frivolity, far from the little miseries that one has to suffer every day, in the warm secure nest of faith, from which you can contemplate in peace the wretchedness of a strange and distant world. And as Christopher listened, he perceived the egotism of that faith. Leonard saw that. He

hurriedly explained: the contemplative life was not a lazy life. On the contrary, a man is more active in prayer than in action. What would the world be without prayer? You expiate the sins of others, you bear the burden of their misdeeds, you offer up your talents, you intercede between the world and God.

Christopher listened in silence with increasing hostility. He was conscious of the hypocrisy of such renunciation in Leonard. He was not unjust enough to assume hypocrisy in all those who believe. He knew well that with a few, such abdication of life comes from the impossibility of living, from a bitter despair, an appeal to death—that with still fewer, it is an ecstasy of passion.... (How long does it last?)... But with the majority of men is it not too often the cold reasoning of souls more busied with their own ease and peace than with the happiness of others, or with truth! And if sincere men are conscious of it, how much they must suffer by such profanation of their ideal!...

Leonard was quite happy, and now set forth the beauty and harmony of the world, seen from the loftiness of the Divine roost: below all was dark, unjust, sorrowful; seen from on high, it all became clear, luminous, ordered: the world was like the works of a clock, perfectly ordered....

Now Christopher only listened absently. He was asking himself: "Does he believe, or does he believe that he believes?" And yet his own faith, his own passionate desire for faith was not shaken. Not the mediocrity of soul, and the poverty of argument of a fool like Leonard could touch that....

Night came down over the town. The seat on which they were sitting was in darkness: the stars shone out, a white mist came up from the river, the crickets chirped under the trees in the cemetery. The bells began to ring: first the highest of them, alone, like a plaintive bird, challenging the sky: then the second, a third lower, joined in its plaint: at last came the deepest, on the fifth, and seemed to answer them. The three voices were merged in each other. At the bottom of the towers there was a buzzing, as of a gigantic hive of bees. The air and the boy's heart quivered. Christopher held his breath, and thought how poor was the music of musicians compared with such an ocean of music, with all the sounds of thousands of creatures: the former, the free world of sounds, compared

with the world tamed, catalogued, coldly labelled by human intelligence. He sank and sank into that sonorous and immense world without continents or bounds....

And when the great murmuring had died away, when the air had ceased at last to quiver, Christopher woke up. He looked about him startled.... He knew nothing. Around him and in him everything was changed. There was no God....

As with faith, so the loss of faith is often equally a flood of grace, a sudden light. Reason counts for nothing: the smallest thing is enough—a word, silence, the sound of bells. A man walks, dreams, expects nothing. Suddenly the world crumbles away. All about him is in ruins. He is alone. He no longer believes.

Christopher was terrified, and could not understand how it had come about. It was like the flooding of a river in the spring....

Leonard's voice was still sounding, more monotonous than the voice of a cricket. Christopher did not hear it: he heard nothing. Night was fully come. Leonard stopped. Surprised to find Christopher motionless, uneasy because of the lateness of the hour, he suggested that they should go home. Christopher did not reply. Leonard took his arm. Christopher trembled, and looked at Leonard with wild eyes.

"Christopher, we must go home," said Leonard.

"Go to hell!" cried Christopher furiously.

"Oh! Christopher! What have I done?" asked Leonard tremulously. He was dumbfounded.

Christopher came to himself.

"Yes. You are right," he said more gently. "I do not know what I'm saying. Go to God! Go to God!"

He was alone. He was in bitter distress.

"Ah! my God! my God!" he cried, wringing his hands, passionately raising his face to the dark sky. "Why do I no longer believe? Why can I believe no more? What has happened to me?..."

The disproportion between the wreck of his faith and the conversation that he had just had with Leonard was too great: it was obvious that the conversation had no more brought it about than that the boisterousness of Amalia's gabble and the pettiness of the people with whom he lived were the cause of the upheaval which for some days had been taking place in

his moral resolutions. These were only pretexts. The uneasiness had not come from without. It was within himself. He felt stirring in his heart monstrous and unknown things, and he dared not rely on his thoughts to face the evil. The evil? Was it evil? A languor, an intoxication, a voluptuous agony filled all his being. He was no longer master of himself. In vain he sought to fortify himself with his former stoicism. His whole being crashed down. He had a sudden consciousness of the vast world, burning, wild, a world immeasurable.... How it swallows up God!

Only for a moment. But the whole balance of his old life was in that moment destroyed.

There was only one person in the family to whom Christopher paid no attention: this was little Rosa. She was not beautiful: and Christopher, who was far from beautiful himself, was very exacting of beauty in others. He had that calm cruelty of youth, for which a woman does not exist if she be ugly—unless she has passed the age for inspiring tenderness, and there is no need to feel for her anything but grave, peaceful and quasi-religious sentiments. Rosa also was not distinguished by any especial gift, although she was not without intelligence: and she was cursed with a chattering tongue, which drove Christopher from her. And he had never taken the trouble to know her, thinking that there was in her nothing to know; and the most he ever did was to glance at her.

But she was of better stuff than most girls: she was certainly better than Minna, whom he had so loved. She was a good girl, no coquette, not at all vain, and until Christopher came it had never occurred to her that she was plain, or if it had, it had not worried her: for none of her family bothered about it. Whenever her grandfather or her mother told her so out of a desire to grumble, she only laughed: she did not believe it, or she attached no importance to it: nor did they. So many others, just as plain, and more, had found someone to love them! The Germans are very mildly indulgent to physical imperfections: they cannot see them: they are even able to embellish them, by virtue of an easy imagination which finds unexpected qualities in the face of their desire to make them like the most illustrious examples of human beauty. Old Euler would not have needed much urging to make him declare that

his granddaughter had the nose of the Ludovisi Juno. Happily he was too grumpy to pay compliments: and Rosa, unconcerned about the shape of her nose, had no vanity except in the accomplishment, with all the ritual, of the famous household duties. She had accepted as Gospel all that she had been taught. She hardly ever went out, and she had very little standard of comparison; she admired her family naïvely, and believed what they said. She was of an expansive and confiding nature, easily satisfied, and tried to fall in with the mournfulness of her home, and docilely used to repeat the pessimistic ideas which she heard. She was a creature of devotion—always thinking of others, trying to please, sharing anxieties, guessing at what others wanted; she had a great need of loving without demanding anything in return. Naturally her family took advantage of her, although they were kind and loved her: but there is always a temptation to take advantage of the love of those who are absolutely delivered into your hands. Her family were so sure of her attentions that they were not at all grateful for them: whatever she did, they expected more. And then, she was clumsy; she was awkward and hasty; her movements were jerky and boyish; she had outbursts of tenderness which used to end in disaster: a broken glass, a jug upset, a door slammed to: things which let loose upon her the wrath of everybody in the house. She was always being snubbed and would go and weep in a corner. Her tears did not last long. She would soon smile again, and begin to chatter without a suspicion of rancour against anybody.

Christopher's advent was an important event in her life. She had often heard of him. Christopher had some place in the gossip of the town: he was a sort of little local celebrity: his name used often to recur in the family conversation, especially when old Jean Michel was alive, who, proud of his grandson, used to sing his praises to all of his acquaintance. Rosa had seen the young musician once or twice at concerts. When she heard that he was coming to live with them, she clapped her hands. She was sternly rebuked for her breach of manners and became confused. She saw no harm in it. In a life so monotonous as hers, a new lodger was a great distraction. She spent the last few days before his arrival in a fever of expectancy. She was fearful lest he should not like the house, and she tried hard to make every room as attractive as

possible. On the morning of his arrival, she even put a little bunch of flowers on the mantelpiece to bid him welcome. As to herself, she took no care at all to look her best; and one glance was enough to make Christopher decide that she was plain, and slovenly dressed. She did not think the same of him, though she had good reason to do so: for Christopher, busy, exhausted, ill-kempt, was even more ugly than usual. But Rosa, who was incapable of thinking the least ill of anybody, Rosa, who thought her grandfather, her father, and her mother, all perfectly beautiful, saw Christopher exactly as she had expected to see him, and admired him with all her heart. She was frightened at sitting next to him at table; and unfortunately her shyness took the shape of a flood of words, which at once alienated Christopher's sympathies. She did not see this, and that first evening remained a shining memory in her life. When she was alone in her room, after they had all gone upstairs, she heard the tread of the new lodgers as they walked over her head; and the sound of it ran joyously through her; the house seemed to her to have taken new life.

The next morning for the first time in her life she looked at herself in the mirror carefully and uneasily, and without exactly knowing the extent of her misfortune she began to be conscious of it. She tried to decide about her features, one by one; but she could not. She was filled with sadness and apprehension. She sighed deeply, and thought of introducing certain changes in her toilet, but she only made herself look still more plain. She conceived the unlucky idea of overwhelming Christopher with her kindness. In her naïve desire to be always seeing her new friends, and doing them service, she was for ever going up and down the stairs, bringing them some utterly useless thing, insisting on helping them, and always laughing and talking and shouting. Her zeal and her stream of talk could only be interrupted by her mother's impatient voice calling her. Christopher looked grim; but for his good resolutions he must have lost his temper quite twenty times. He restrained himself for two days; on the third, he locked his door. Rosa knocked, called, understood, went downstairs in dismay, and did not try again. When he saw her he explained that he was very busy and could not be disturbed. She humbly begged his pardon. She could not deceive herself as to the failure of her innocent advances: they had accom-

plished the opposite of her intention: they had alienated Christopher. He no longer took the trouble to conceal his ill-humour; he did not listen when she talked, and did not disguise his impatience. She felt that her chatter irritated him, and by force of will she succeeded in keeping silent for a part of the evening: but the thing was stronger than herself: suddenly she would break out again and her words would tumble over each other more tumultuously than ever. Christopher would leave her in the middle of a sentence. She was not angry with him. She was angry with herself. She thought herself stupid, tiresome, ridiculous: all her faults assumed enormous proportions and she tried to wrestle with them: but she was discouraged by the check upon her first attempts, and said to herself that she could not do it, that she was not strong enough. But she would try again.

But there were other faults against which she was powerless: what could she do against her plainness? There was no doubt about it. The certainty of her misfortune had suddenly been revealed to her one day when she was looking at herself in the mirror; it came like a thunderclap. Of course she exaggerated the evil, and saw her nose as ten times larger than it was; it seemed to her to fill all her face; she dared not show herself; she wished to die. But there is in youth such a power of hope that these fits of discouragement never lasted long: she would end by pretending that she had been mistaken; she would try to believe it, and for a moment or two would actually succeed in thinking her nose quite ordinary and almost shapely. Her instinct made her attempt, though very clumsily, certain childish tricks, a way of doing her hair so as not to show her forehead so much and so accentuate the disproportion of her face. And yet, there was no coquetry in her; no thought of love had crossed her mind, or she was unconscious of it. She asked little: nothing but a little friendship: but Christopher did not show any inclination to give her that little. It seemed to Rosa that she would have been perfectly happy had he only condescended to say good day when they met. A friendly good evening with a little kindness. But Christopher usually looked so hard and so cold! It chilled her. He never said anything disagreeable to her, but she would rather have had cruel reproaches than such cruel silence.

One evening Christopher was playing his piano. He had

taken up his quarters in a little attic at the top of the house so as not to be so much disturbed by the noise. Downstairs Rosa was listening to him, deeply moved. She loved music, though her taste was bad and unformed. While her mother was there, she stayed in a corner of the room and bent over her sewing, apparently absorbed in her work; but her heart was with the sounds coming from upstairs, and she wished to miss nothing. As soon as Amalia went out for a walk in the neighbourhood, Rosa leaped to her feet, threw down her sewing, and went upstairs with her heart beating until she came to the attic door. She held her breath and laid her ear against the door. She stayed like that until Amalia returned. She went on tip-toe, taking care to make no noise, but as she was not very sure-footed, and was always in a hurry, she was always tripping upon the stairs; and once while she was listening, leaning forward with her cheek glued to the keyhole, she lost her balance, and banged her forehead against the door. She was so alarmed that she lost her breath. The piano stopped dead: she could not escape. She was getting up when the door opened. Christopher saw her, glared at her furiously, and then without a word, brushed her aside, walked angrily downstairs, and went out. He did not return until dinner-time, paid no heed to the despairing looks with which she asked his pardon, ignored her existence, and for several weeks he never played at all. Rosa secretly shed many tears; no one noticed it, no one paid any attention to her. Ardently she prayed to God... for what? She did not know. She had to confide her grief in someone. She was sure that Christopher destested her.

And, in spite of all, she hoped. It was enough for her if Christopher seemed to show any sign of interest in her, if he appeared to listen to what she said, if he pressed her hand with a little more friendliness than usual....

A few imprudent words from her relations set her imagination off upon a false road.

The whole family was filled with sympathy for Christopher. The big boy of sixteen, serious and solitary, who had such lofty ideas of his duty, inspired a sort of respect in them all. His fits of ill-temper, his obstinate silences, his gloomy air, his brusque manner, were not surprising in such a house as that. Frau Vogel herself, who regarded every artist as a loafer,

dared not reproach him aggressively, as she would have liked to do, with the hours that he spent in star-gazing in the evening, leaning, motionless, out of the attic window overlooking the yard, until night fell; for she knew that during the rest of the day he was hard at work with his lessons; and she humoured him—like the rest—for an ulterior motive which no one expressed, though everybody knew it.

Rosa had seen her parents exchanging looks and mysterious whisperings when she was talking to Christopher. At first she took no notice of it. Then she was puzzled and roused by it; she longed to know what they were saying, but dared not ask.

One evening when she had climbed on to a garden seat to untie the clothes-line hung between two trees, she leaned on Christopher's shoulder to jump down. Just at that moment her eyes met her grandfather's and her father's; they were sitting smoking their pipes, and leaning against the wall of the house. The two men winked at each other, and Justus Euler said to Vogel:

"They will make a fine couple."

Vogel nudged him, seeing that the girl was listening, and he covered his remark very cleverly—(or so he thought)—with a loud "Hm! hm!" that could have been heard twenty yards away. Christopher, whose back was turned, saw nothing, but Rosa was so bowled over by it that she forgot that she was jumping down, and sprained her foot. She would have fallen had not Christopher caught her, muttering curses on her clumsiness. She had hurt herself badly, but she did not show it; she hardly thought of it; she thought only of what she had just heard. She walked to her room; every step was agony to her; she stiffened herself against it so as not to let it be seen. A delicious, vague uneasiness surged through her. She fell into a chair at the foot of her bed and hid her face in the coverlet. Her cheeks were burning; there were tears in her eyes, and she laughed. She was ashamed, she wished to sink into the depths of the earth, she could not fix her ideas; her blood beat in her temples, there were sharp pains in her ankle; she was in a feverish stupor. Vaguely she heard sounds outside, children crying and playing in the street, and her grandfather's words were ringing in her ears; she was thrilled, she laughed softly, she blushed, with her face buried in the eiderdown: she prayed, gave thanks, desired, feared—she loved.

Her mother called her. She tried to get up. At the first step she felt a pain so unbearable that she almost fainted; her head swam. She thought she was going to die, she wished to die, and at the same time she wished to live with all the forces of her being, to live for the promised happiness. Her mother came at last, and the whole household was soon excited. She was scolded as usual, her ankle was dressed, she was put to bed, and sank into the sweet bewilderment of her physical pain and her inward joy. The night was sweet.... The smallest memory of that dear evening was hallowed for her. She did not think of Christopher, she knew not what she thought. She was happy.

The next day, Christopher, who thought himself in some measure responsible for the accident, came to make inquiries, and for the first time he made some show of affection for her. She was filled with gratitude, and blessed her sprained ankle. She would gladly have suffered all her life, if, all her life, she might have such joy. She had to lie down for several days and never move; she spent them in turning over and over her grandfather's words, and considering them. Had he said:

"They will..."

Or:

"They would...?"

But was it possible that he had never said anything of the kind?—Yes. He had said it; she was certain of it.... What! Did they not see that she was ugly, and that Christopher could not bear her?... But it was so good to hope! She came to believe that perhaps she had been wrong, that she was not as ugly as she thought; she would sit up on her sofa to try and see herself in the mirror on the wall opposite, above the mantelpiece; she did not know what to think. After all, her father and her grandfather were better judges than herself; people cannot tell about themselves.... Oh! Heaven, if it were possible!... If it could be... if, she never dared think it, if... if she were pretty!... Perhaps, also, she had exaggerated Christopher's antipathy. No doubt he was indifferent, and after the interest he had shown in her the day after the accident did not bother about her any more; he forgot to inquire; but Rosa made excuses for him, he was so busy! How should he think of her? An artist cannot be judged like other men....

And yet, resigned though she was, she could not help expecting with beating heart a word of sympathy from him when he came near her. A word only, a look . . . her imagination did the rest. In the beginning love needs so little food! It is enough to see, to touch as you pass; such a power of dreams flows from the soul in such moments, that almost of itself it can create its love: a trifle can plunge it into ecstasy that later, when it is more satisfied, and in proportion more exacting, it will hardly find again when at last it does possess the object of its desire. Rosa lived absolutely, though no one knew it, in a romance of her own fashioning, pieced together by herself: Christopher loved her secretly, and was too shy to confess his love, or there was some stupid reason, fantastic or romantic, delightful to the imagination of the sentimental little ninny. She fashioned endless stories, and all perfectly absurd; she knew it herself, but tried not to know it; she lied to herself voluptuously for days and days as she bent over her sewing. It made her forget to talk: her flood of words was turned inward, like a river which suddenly disappears underground. But then the river took its revenge. What a debauch of speeches, of unuttered conversations which no one heard but herself! Sometimes her lips would move as they do with people who have to spell out the syllables to themselves as they read so as to understand them.

When her dreams left her she was happy and sad. She knew that things were not as she had just told herself: but she was left with a reflected happiness, and had greater confidence for her life. She did not despair of winning Christopher.

She did not admit it to herself, but she set about doing it. With the sureness of instinct that great affection brings, the awkward, ignorant girl contrived immediately to find the road by which she might reach her beloved's heart. She did not turn directly to him. But as soon as she was better and could once more walk about the house she approached Louisa. The smallest excuse served. She found a thousand little services to render her. When she went out she never failed to undertake various errands: she spared her going to the market, arguments with tradespeople; she would fetch water for her from the pump in the yard; she cleaned the windows and polished the floors in spite of Louisa's protestations, who was confused when she did not do her work alone; but she was so

weary that she had not the strength to oppose anybody who came to help her. Christopher was out all day. Louisa felt that she was deserted, and the companionship of the affectionate, chattering girl was pleasant to her. Rosa took up her quarters in her room. She brought her sewing, and talked all the time. By clumsy devices she tried to bring conversation round to Christopher. Just to hear of him, even to hear his name, made her happy; her hands would tremble; she would sit with downcast eyes. Louisa was delighted to talk of her beloved Christopher, and would tell little tales of his childhood, trivial and just a little ridiculous; but there was no fear of Rosa thinking them so: she took a great joy, and there was a dear emotion for her, in imagining Christopher as a child, and doing all the tricks and having all the darling ways of children: in her the motherly tenderness which lies in the hearts of all woman was mingled deliciously with that other tenderness: she would laugh heartily and tears would come to her eyes. Louisa was touched by the interest that Rosa took in her. She guessed dimly what was in the girl's heart, but she never let it appear that she did so; but she was glad of it; for of all in the house she only knew the worth of the girl's heart. Sometimes she would stop talking to look at her. Rosa, surprised by her silence, would raise her eyes from her work. Louisa would smile at her. Rosa would throw herself into her arms, suddenly, passionately, and would hide her face in Louisa's bosom. Then they would go on working and talking, as if nothing had happened.

In the evening when Christopher came home, Louisa, grateful for Rosa's attentions, and in pursuance of the little plan she had made, always praised the girl to the skies. Christopher was touched by Rosa's kindness. He saw how much good she was doing his mother, in whose face there was more serenity: and he would thank her effusively. Rosa would murmur, and escape to conceal her embarrassment; so she appeared a thousand times more intelligent and sympathetic to Christopher than if she had spoken. He looked at her with a less prejudiced eye, and did not conceal his surprise at finding ususpected qualities in her. Rosa saw that; she marked the progress that she made in his sympathy and thought that his sympathy would lead to love. She gave herself up more than ever to her dreams. She came near to believing with the beautiful pre-

sumption of youth that what you desire with all your being is always accomplished in the end. Besides, how was her desire unreasonable? Should not Christopher have been more sensible than any other of her goodness and her affectionate need of self-devotion?

But Christopher gave no thought to her. He esteemed her; but she filled no room in his thoughts. He was busied with far other things at the moment. Christopher was no longer Christopher. He did not know himself. He was in a mighty travail that was like to sweep everything away, a complete upheaval.

Christopher was conscious of extreme weariness and great uneasiness. He was for no reason worn out; his head was heavy, his eyes, his ears, all his senses were dumb and throbbing. He could not give his attention to anything. His mind leaped from one subject to another, and was in a fever that sucked him dry. The perpetual fluttering of images in his mind made him giddy. At first he attributed it to fatigue and the enervation of the first days of spring. But spring passed and his sickness only grew worse.

It was what the poets who only touch lightly on things call the unease of adolescence, the trouble of the cherubim, the waking of the desire of love in the young body and soul. As if the fearful crisis of all a man's being, breaking up, dying, and coming to full rebirth, as if the cataclysm in which everything, faith, thought, action, all life, seems like to be blotted out, and then to be new-forged in the convulsions of sorrow and joy, can be reduced to terms of a child's folly!

All his body and soul were in a ferment. He watched them, having no strength to struggle, with a mixture of curiosity and disgust. He did not understand what was happening in himself. His whole being was disintegrated. He spent days together in absolute torpor. Work was torture to him. At night he slept heavily and in snatches, dreaming monstrously, with gusts of desire; the soul of a beast was racing madly in him. Burning, bathed in sweat, he watched himself in horror; he tried to break free of the crazy and unclean thoughts that possessed him, and he wondered if he were going mad.

The day gave him no shelter from his brutish thoughts. In the depths of his soul he felt that he was slipping down and down; there was no stay to clutch at; no barrier to keep back

chaos. All his defences, all his citadels, with the quadruple rampart that hemmed him in so proudly—his God, his art, his pride, his moral faith—all was crumbling away, falling piece by piece from him. He saw himself naked, bound, lying unable to move, like a corpse on which vermin swarm. He had spasms of revolt: where was his will, of which he was so proud? He called to it in vain: it was like the efforts that one makes in sleep, knowing that one is dreaming, and trying to awake. Then one succeeds only in falling from one dream to another like a lump of lead, and in being more and more choked by the suffocation of the soul in bondage. At last he found that it was less painful not to struggle. He decided not to do so, with fatalistic apathy and despair.

The even tenor of his life seemed to be broken up. Now, he slipped down a subterranean crevasse and was about to disappear; now he bounded up again with a violent jerk. The chain of his days was snapped. In the midst of the even plain of the hours great gaping holes would open to engulf his soul. Christopher looked on at the spectacle as though it did not concern him. Everything, everybody—and himself—were strange to him. He went about his business, did his work, automatically: it seemed to him that the machinery of his life might stop at any moment: the wheels were out of gear. At dinner with his mother and the others, in the orchestra with the musicians and the audience, suddenly there would be a void and emptiness in his brain: he would look stupidly at the grinning faces about him: and he could not understand. He would ask himself:

"What is there between these creatures and . . .?"

He dared not even say:

". . . and me."

For he knew not whether he existed. He would speak and his voice would seem to issue from another body. He would move, and he saw his movements from afar, from above—from the top of a tower. He would pass his hand over his face, and his eyes would wander. He was often near doing crazy things.

It was especially when he was most in public that he had to keep guard on himself. For example, on the evenings when he went to the Palace or was playing in public. Then he would suddenly be seized by a terrific desire to make a face, or say something outrageous, to pull the Grand Duke's nose, or to

take a running kick at one of the ladies. One whole evening while he was conducting the orchestra, he struggled against an insensate desire to undress himself in public: and he was haunted by the idea from the moment when he tried to check it: he had to exert all his strength not to give way to it. When he issued from the brute struggle he was dripping with sweat and his mind was blank. He was really mad. It was enough for him to think that he must not do a thing for it to fasten on him with the maddening tenacity of a fixed idea.

So his life was spent in a series of unbridled outbreaks and of endless falls into emptiness. A furious wind in the desert. Whence came this wind? From what abyss came these desires that wrenched his body and mind? He was like a bow stretched to breaking point by a strong hand—to what end unknown?—which then springs back like a piece of dead wood. Of what force was he the prey? He dared not probe for it. He felt that he was beaten, humiliated, and he would not face his defeat. He was weary and broken in spirit. He understood now the people whom formerly he had despised: those who will not see awkward truth. In the empty hours, when he remembered that time was passing, his work neglected, the future lost, he was frozen with terror. But there was no reaction: and his cowardice found excuses in desperate affirmation of the void in which he lived: he took a bitter delight in abandoning himself to it like a wreck on the waters. What was the good of fighting? There was nothing beautiful, nor good; neither God, nor life, nor being of any sort. In the street as he walked suddenly the earth would sink away from him: there was neither ground, nor air, nor light, nor himself: there was nothing. He would fall, his head would drag him down, face forward: he could hardly hold himself up; he was on the point of collapse. He thought he was going to die, suddenly, struck down. He thought he was dead....

Christopher was growing a new skin. Christopher was growing a new soul. And seeing the worn-out and rotten soul of his childhood falling away he never dreamed that he was taking on a new one, young and strong. As through life we change our bodies, so also do we change our souls: and the metamorphosis does not always take place slowly over many days; there are times of crises when the whole is suddenly renewed. The adult changes his soul. The old soul that is cast off dies.

In those hours of anguish we think that all is at an end. And the whole thing begins again. A life dies. Another life has already come into being.

One night he was alone in his room, with his elbow on his desk under the light of a candle. His back was turned to the window. He was not working. He had not been able to work for weeks. Everything was twisting and turning in his head. He had brought everything under scrutiny at once; religion, morals, art, the whole of life. And in the general dissolution of his thoughts was no method, no order: he had plunged into the reading of books taken haphazard from his grandfather's heterogeneous library or from Vogel's collection of books: books of theology, science, philosophy, an odd lot, of which he understood nothing, having everything to learn: he could not finish any of them, and in the middle of them went off on divagations, endless whimsies, which left him weary, empty, and in mortal sorrow.

So, that evening, he was sunk in an exhausted torpor. The whole house was asleep. His window was open. Not a breath came up from the yard. Thick clouds filled the sky. Christopher mechanically watched the candle burn away at the bottom of the candlestick. He could not go to bed. He had no thought of anything. He felt the void growing, growing from moment to moment. He tried not to see the abyss that drew him to its brink: and in spite of himself he leaned over and his eyes gazed into the depths of the night. In the void, chaos was stirring, and faint sounds came from the darkness. Agony filled him: a shiver ran down his spine: his skin tingled: he clutched the table so as not to fall. Convulsively he awaited nameless things, a miracle, a God....

Suddenly, like a opened sluice, in the yard behind him, a deluge of water, a heavy rain, large drops, pouring down, fell. The still air quivered. The dry, hard soil rang out like a bell. And the vast scent of the earth, burning, warm as that of an animal, the smell of the flowers, fruit, and amorous flesh rose in a spasm of fury and pleasure. Christopher, under illusion, at fullest stretch, shook. He trembled.... The veil was rent. He was blinded. By a flash of lightning, he saw, in the depths of the night, he saw—he was God. God was in himself; he burst the ceiling of the room, the walls of the house. He cracked the

very bounds of existence. He filled the sky, the universe, space. The world coursed through him, like a cataract. In the horror and ecstasy of that cataclysm, Christopher fell too, swept along by the whirlwind which brushed away and crushed like straws the laws of Nature. He was breathless: he was drunk with the swift hurtling down into God... God-abyss! God-gulf! Fire of Being! Hurricane of life! Madness of living—aimless, uncontrolled, beyond reason,—for the fury of living!

When the crisis was over, he fell into a deep sleep and slept as he had not done for long enough. Next day when he awoke his head swam: he was as broken as though he had been drunk. But in his inmost heart he still had a beam of that sombre and great light that had struck him down the night before. He tried to relight it. In vain. The more he pursued it, the more it eluded him. From that time on, all his energy was directed towards recalling the vision of a moment. The endeavour was futile. Ecstasy does not answer the bidding of the will.

But that mystic exaltation was not the only experience that he had of it: it recurred several times but never with the intensity of the first. It came always at moments when Christopher was least expecting it, for a second only, a time so short, so sudden—no longer than a wink of an eye or a raising of a hand—that the vision was gone before he could discover that it was: and then he would wonder whether he had not dreamed it. After that fiery bolt that had set the night aflame, it was a gleaming dust, shedding fleeting sparks, which the eye could hardly see as they sped by. But they reappeared more and more often: and in the end they surrounded Christopher with a halo of perpetual misty dreams, in which his spirit melted. Everything that distracted him in his state of semi-hallucination was an irritation to him. It was impossible to work; he gave up thinking about it. Society was odious to him; and more than any, that of his intimates, even that of his mother, because they arrogated to themselves more rights over his soul.

He left the house: he took to spending his days outside, and never returned until nightfall. He sought the solitude of the fields, and delivered himself up to it, drank his fill of it, like a maniac who wishes not to be disturbed by anything in the obsession of his fixed ideas. But in the great sweet air, in con-

tact with the earth, his obsession relaxed, his ideas ceased to appear like spectres. His exaltation was no less: rather it was heightened, but it was no longer a dangerous delirium of the mind but a healthy intoxication of his whole being: body and soul crazy in their strength.

He rediscovered the world, as though he had never seen it. It was a new childhood. It was as though a magic word had been uttered. An "Open Sesame!"—Nature flamed with gladness. The sun boiled. The liquid sky ran like a clear river. The earth steamed and cried aloud in delight. The plants, the trees, the insects, all the innumerable creatures were like dazzling tongues of flame in the fire of life writhing upwards. Everything sang aloud in joy.

And that joy was his own. That strength was his own. He was no longer cut off from the rest of the world. Till then, even in the happy days of childhood, when he saw nature with ardent and delightful curiosity, all creatures had seemed to him to be little worlds shut up, terrifying and grotesque, unrelated to himself, and incomprehensible. He was not even sure that they had feeling and life. They were strange machines. And sometimes Christopher had even, with the unconscious cruelty of a child, dismembered wretched insects without dreaming that they might suffer—for the pleasure of watching their queer contortions. His uncle Gottfried, usually so calm, had one day to snatch indignantly from his hands an unhappy fly that he was torturing. The boy had tried to laugh at first: then he had burst into tears, moved by his uncle's emotion: he began to understand that his victim did really exist, as well as himself, and that he had committed a crime. But if thereafter nothing would have induced him to do harm to the beasts, he never felt any sympathy for them: he used to pass them by without ever trying to feel what it was that worked their machinery: rather he was afraid to think of it: it was something like a bad dream. And now everything was made plain. These humble, obscure creatures became in their turn centres of light.

Lying on his belly in the grass where creatures swarmed, in the shade of the trees that buzzed with insects, Christopher would watch the fevered movements of the ants, the long-legged spiders, that seemed to dance as they walked, the bounding grasshoppers, that leap aside, the heavy, bustling

beetles, and the naked worms, pink and glabrous, mottled with white, or, with his hands under his head and his eyes closed, he would listen to the invisible orchestra, the roundelay of the frenzied insects circling in the sunbeam about the scented pines, the trumpeting of the mosquitoes, the organ notes of the wasps, the brass of the wild bees humming like bells in the tops of the trees, and the godlike whispering of the swaying trees, the sweet moaning of the wind in the branches, the soft whispering of the waving grass, like a breath of wind rippling the limpid surface of a lake, like the rustling of a light dress and lovers' footsteps coming near, and passing, then lost upon the air.

He heard all these sounds and cries within himself. Through all these creatures from the smallest to the greatest flowed the same river of life: and in it he too swam. So, he was one of them, he was of their blood, and, brotherly, he heard the echo of their sorrows and their joys: their strength was merged in his like a river fed with thousands of streams. He sank into them. His lungs were like to burst with the wind, too freely blowing, too strong, that burst the windows and forced its way into the closed house of his suffocating heart. The change was too abrupt: after finding everywhere a void, when he had been buried only in his own existence, and had felt it slipping from him and dissolving like rain, now everywhere he found infinite and unmeasured Being, now that he longed to forget himself, to find rebirth in the universe. He seemed to have issued from the grave. He swam voluptuously in life flowing free and full: and borne on by its current he thought that he was free. He did not know that he was less free than ever, that no creature is ever free, that even the law that governs the universe is not free, that only death—perhaps—can bring deliverance.

But the chrysalis issuing from its stifling sheath joyously stretched its limbs in its new shape, and had no time as yet to mark the bounds of its new prison.

There began a new cycle of days. Days of gold and fever, mysterious, enchanted, like those of his childhood, when one by one he discovered things for the first time. From dawn to set of sun he lived in one long mirage. He deserted all his business. The conscientious boy, who for years had never missed

a lesson, or an orchestra rehearsal, even when he was ill, was for ever finding paltry excuses for neglecting his work. He was not afraid to lie. He had no remorse about it. The stoic principles of life, to which he had hitherto delighted to bend his will, morality, duty, now seemed to him to have no truth nor reason. Their jealous despotism was smashed against Nature. Human nature, healthy, strong, free, that alone was virtue: to hell with all the rest! It provoked pitiful laughter to see the little peddling rules of prudence and policy which the world adorns with the name of morality, while it pretends to enclose all life within them. A preposterous molehill, an ant-like people! Life sees to it that they are brought to reason. Life does but pass, and all is swept away. . . .

Bursting with energy, Christopher had moments when he was consumed with a desire to destroy, to burn, to smash, to glut with actions, blind and uncontrolled, the force which chocked him. These outbursts usually ended in a sharp reaction: he would weep, and fling himself down on the ground, and kiss the earth, and try to dig into it with his teeth and hands, to feed himself with it, to merge into it: he trembled then with fever and desire.

One evening he was walking in the outskirts of a wood. His eyes were swimming with the light, his head was whirling: he was in that state of exaltation when all creatures and things were transfigured. To that was added the magic of the soft warm light of evening. Rays of purple and gold hovered in the trees. From the meadows seemed to come a phosphorescent glimmer. In a field near by a girl was making hay. In her blouse and short skirt, with her arms and neck bare, she was raking the hay and heaving it up. She had a short nose, wide cheeks, a round face, a handkerchief thrown over her hair. The setting sun touched with red her sunburned skin, which, like a piece of pottery, seemed to absorb the last beams of the day.

She fascinated Christopher. Leaning against a beech tree he watched her come towards the verge of the woods, eagerly, passionately. Everything else had disappeared. She took no notice of him. For a moment she looked at him cautiously: he saw her eyes blue and hard in her brown face. She passed so near to him that, when she leaned down to gather up the hay, through her open blouse he saw a soft down on her shoulders

and back. Suddenly the vague desire which was in him leaped forth. He hurled himself at her from behind, seized her neck and waist, threw back her head and fastened his lips upon hers. He kissed her dry, cracked lips until he came against her teeth that bit him angrily. His hands ran over her rough arms, over her blouse wet with her sweat. She struggled. He held her tighter, he wished to strangle her. She broke loose, cried out, spat, wiped her lips with her hand, and hurled insults at him. He let her go and fled across the fields. She threw stones at him and went on discharging after him a litany of filthy epithets. He blushed, less for anything that she might say or think, but for what he was thinking himself. The sudden unconscious act filled him with terror. What had he done? What should he do? What he was able to understand of it all only filled him with disgust. And he was tempted by his disgust. He fought against himself and knew not on which side was the real Christopher. A blind force beset him: in vain did he fly from it: it was only to fly from himself. What would she do about him? What should he do tomorrow . . . in an hour . . . the time it took to cross the ploughed field to reach the road? . . . Would he ever reach it? Should he not stop, and go back, and run back to the girl? And then? . . . He remembered that delirious moment when he had held her by the throat. Everything was possible. All things were worth while. A crime even. . . . Yes, even a crime. . . . The turmoil in his heart made him breathless. When he reached the road he stopped to breathe. Over there the girl was talking to another girl who had been attracted by her cries: and with arms akimbo, they were looking at each other and shouting with laughter.

II

SABINE

He went home. He shut himself up in his room and never stirred for several days. He only went out, even into the town, when he was compelled. He was fearful of ever going out beyond the gates and venturing forth into the fields: he was afraid of once more falling in with the soft, maddening breath that had blown upon him like a rushing wind during a calm in

a storm. He thought that the walls of the town might preserve him from it. He never dreamed that for the enemy to slip within there need be only the smallest crack in the closed shutters, no more than is needed for a peep out.

In a wing of the house, on the other side of the yard, there lodged on the ground floor a young woman of twenty, some months a widow, with a little girl. Frau Sabine Froehlich was also a tenant of old Euler's. She occupied the shop which opened on to the street, and she had as well two rooms looking on to the yard, together with a little patch of garden, marked off from the Eulers' by a wire fence up which ivy climbed. They did not often see her: the child used to play down in the garden from morning to night making mud pies: and the garden was left to itself, to the great distress of old Justus, who loved tidy paths and neatness in the beds. He had tried to bring the matter to the attention of his tenant: but that was probably why she did not appear: and the garden was not improved by it.

Frau Froehlich kept a little draper's shop which might have had customers enough, thanks to its position in a street of shops in the centre of the town: but she did not bother about it any more than about her garden. Instead of doing her housework herself, as, according to Frau Vogel, every self-respecting woman ought to do—especially when she is in circumstances which do not permit, much less excuse, idleness—she had hired a little servant, a girl of fifteen, who came in for a few hours in the morning to clean the rooms and look after the shop, while the young woman lay in bed or dawdled over her toilet.

Christopher used to see her sometimes, through his windows, walking about her room, with bare feet, in her long night-gown, or sitting for hours together before her mirror: for she was so careless that she used to forget to draw her curtains: and when she saw him, she was so lazy that she could not take the trouble to go and lower them. Christopher, more modest than she, would leave the window so as not to incommode her: but the temptation was great. He would blush a little and steal a glance at her bare arms, which were rather thin, as she drew them languidly around her flowing hair, and with her hands clasped behind her head, lost herself in a dream, until they were numbed, and then she would let them fall. Christopher

would pretend that he only saw these pleasant sights inadvertently as he happened to pass the window, and that they did not disturb him in his musical thoughts: but he liked it, and in the end he wasted as much time in watching Frau Sabine, as she did over her toilet. Not that she was a coquette: she was rather careless, generally, and did not take anything like the meticulous care with her appearance that Amalia or Rosa did. If she dawdled in front of her dressing-table it was from pure laziness: every time she put in a pin she had to rest from the effort of it, while she made little piteous faces at herself in the mirrors. She was never quite properly dressed at the end of the day.

Often her servant used to go before Sabine was ready: and a customer would ring the shop-bell. She would let him ring and call once or twice before she could make up her mind to get up from her chair. She would go down, smiling, never hurrying—and never hurrying, would look for the article required, and if she could not find it after looking for some time, or even (as happened sometimes) if she had to take too much trouble to reach it, as for instance, taking the ladder from one end of the shop to the other—she would say calmly that she did not have it in stock: and as she never bothered to put her stock in order, or to order more of the articles of which she had run out, her customers used to lose patience and go elsewhere. But she never minded. How could you be angry with such a pleasant creature who spoke so sweetly, and was never excited about anything? She did not mind what anybody said to her: and she made this so clear that those who began to complain never had the courage to go on: they used to go, answering her charming smile with a smile: but they never came back. She never bothered about it. She went on smiling.

She was like a little Florentine figure. Her well-marked eyebrows were arched: her grey eyes were half open behind the curtain of her lashes. The lower eyelid was a little swollen, with a little crease below it. Her little, finely drawn nose turned up slightly at the end. Another little curve lay between it and her upper lip, which curled up above her half-open mouth, pouting in a weary smile. Her lower lip was a little thick: the lower part of her face was rounded, and had the serious expression of the little virgins of Filippo Lippi. Her complexion was a little muddy, her hair was light brown,

always untidy, and done up in a slovenly chignon. She was slight of figure, small-boned. And her movements were lazy. Dressed carelessly—a gaping bodice, buttons missing, ugly, worn shoes, always looking a little slovenly—she charmed by her grace and youth, her gentleness, her instinctively coaxing ways. When she appeared to take the air at the door of her shop, the young men who passed used to look at her with pleasure: and although she did not bother about them, she noticed it none the less. Always then she wore that grateful and glad expression which is in the eyes of all woman when they know that they have been seen with sympathetic eyes. It seemed to say:

"Thank you! ... Again! Look at me again!" But though it gave her pleasure to please, her indifference would never let her make the smallest effort to please.

She was an object of scandal to the Euler-Vogels. Everything about her offended them: her indolence, the untidiness of her house, the carelessness of her dress, her polite indifference to their remarks, her perpetual smile, the impertinent serenity with which she had accepted her husband's death, her child's illnesses, her straitened circumstances, the great and small annoyances of her daily life, while nothing could change one jot of her favourite habits, or her eternal lounging—everything about her offended them: and the worst of all was that, as she was, she did give pleasure. Frau Vogel could not forgive her that. It was almost as though Sabine did it on purpose, on purpose, ironically, to set at naught by her conduct the great traditions, the true principles, the savourless duty, the pleasureless labour, the restlessness, the noise, the quarrels, the mooning ways, the healthy pessimism which was the motive power of the Euler family, as it is that of all respectable persons, and made their life a foretaste of purgatory. That a woman who did nothing but dawdle about all the blessed day should take upon herself to defy them with her calm insolence, while they bore their suffering in silence like galley-slaves—and that people should approve of her into the bargain—that was beyond the limit, that was enough to turn you against respectability! ... Fortunately, thank God, there were still a few sensible people left in the world. Frau Vogel consoled herself with them. They exchanged remarks about the little widow, and spied on her through her shutters.

Such gossip was the joy of the family when they met at supper. Christopher would listen absently. He was so used to hearing the Vogels set themselves up as censors of their neighbours that he never took any notice of it. Besides, he knew nothing of Frau Sabine except her bare neck and arms, and though they were pleasing enough, they did not justify his coming to a definite opinion about her. However, he was conscious of a kindly feeling towards her: and in a contradictory spirit he was especially grateful to her for displeasing Frau Vogel.

After dinner in the evening when it was very hot it was impossible to stay in the stifling yard, where the sun shone the whole afternoon. The only place in the house where it was possible to breathe was the room looking into the street. Euler and his son-in-law used sometimes to go and sit on the doorstep with Louisa. Frau Vogel and Rosa would only appear for a moment: they were kept by their housework: Frau Vogel took a pride in showing that she had no time for dawdling: and she used to say, loudly enough to be overheard, that all the people sitting there and yawning on their doorsteps, without doing a stitch of work, got on her nerves. As she could not—(to her sorrow)—compel them to work, she would pretend not to see them, and would go in and work furiously. Rosa thought she must do likewise. Euler and Vogel would discover draughts everywhere, and fearful of catching cold, would go up to their rooms: they used to go to bed early, and would have thought themselves ruined had they changed the least of their habits. After nine o'clock only Louisa and Christopher would be left. Louisa spent the day in her room: and, in the evening, Christopher used to take pains to be with her, whenever he could, to make her take the air. If she were left alone she would never go out: the noise of the street frightened her. Children were always chasing each other with shrill cries. All the dogs of the neighbourhood took it up and barked. The sound of a piano came up, a little farther off a clarinet, and in the next street a cornet à pistons. Voices chattered. People came and went and stood in groups in front of their houses. Louisa would have lost her head if she had been left alone in all the uproar. But when her son was with her it gave her pleasure. The noise would gradually die down. The children and the dogs would go to bed first. The groups of people

would break up. The air would become more pure. Silence would descend upon the street. Louisa would tell in her thin voice the little scraps of news that she had heard from Amalia or Rosa. She was not greatly interested in them. But she never knew what to talk about to her son, and she felt the need of keeping in touch with him, of saying something to him. And Christopher, who felt her need, would pretend to be interested in everything she said: but he did not listen. He was off in vague dreams, turning over in his mind the doings of the day.

One evening when they were sitting there—while his mother was talking—he saw the door of the draper's shop open. A woman came out silently and sat in the street. Her chair was only a few yards from Louisa. She was sitting in the darkest shadow. Christopher could not see her face: but he recognised her. His dreams vanished. The air seemed sweeter to him. Louisa had not noticed Sabine's presence, and went on with her chatter in a low voice. Christopher paid more attention to her, and he felt impelled to throw out a remark here and there, to talk, perhaps to be heard. The slight figure sat there without stirring, a little limp, with her legs lightly crossed and her hands lying folded in her lap. She was looking straight in front of her, and seemed to hear nothing. Louisa was overcome with drowsiness. She went in. Christopher said he would stay a little longer.

It was nearly ten. The street was nearly empty. The people were going indoors. The sound of the shops being shut was heard. The lighted windows winked and then were dark again. One or two were still lit: then they were blotted out. Silence... They were alone, they did not look at each other, they held their breath, they seemed not to be aware of each other. From the distant fields came the smell of the new-mown hay, and from a balcony in a house near by the scent of a pot of cloves. No wind stirred. Above their heads was the Milky Way. To their right red Jupiter. Above a chimney Charles's Wain bent its axles: in the pale green sky its stars flowered like daisies. From the bells of the parish church eleven o'clock rang out and was caught up by all the other churches, with their voices clear or muffled, and, from the houses, by the dim chiming of the clocks or husky cuckoos.

They awoke suddenly from their dreams, and got up at the

same moment. And just as they were going indoors they both bowed without speaking. Christopher went up to his room. He lighted his candle, and sat down by his desk with his head in his hands, and stayed so for a long time without a thought. Then he sighed and went to bed.

Next day when he got up, mechanically he went to his window to look down into Sabine's room. But the curtains were drawn. They were drawn the whole morning. They were drawn ever after.

Next evening Christopher proposed to his mother that they should go again to sit by the door. He did so regularly. Louisa was glad of it: she did not like his shutting himself up in his room immediately after dinner with the window and shutters closed. The little silent shadow never failed to come and sit in its usual place. They gave each other a quick nod, which Louisa never noticed. Christopher would talk to his mother. Sabine would smile at her little girl, playing in the street: about nine she would go and put her to bed and would then return noiselessly. If she stayed a little Christopher would begin to be afraid that she would not come back. He would listen for sounds in the house, the laughter of the little girl who would not go to sleep: he would hear the rustling of Sabine's dress before she appeared on the threshold of the shop. Then he would look away and talk to his mother more eagerly. Sometimes he would feel that Sabine was looking at him. In turn he would furtively look at her. But their eyes would never meet.

The child was a bond between them. She would run about in the street with other children. They would find amusement in teasing a good-tempered dog sleeping there with his nose in his paws: he would cock a red eye and at last would emit a growl of boredom: then they would fly this way and that screaming in terror and happiness. The little girl would give piercing shrieks, and look behind her as though she were being pursued: she would throw herself into Louisa's lap, and Louisa would smile fondly. She would keep the child and question her: and so she would enter into conversation with Sabine. Christopher never joined in. He never spoke to Sabine. Sabine never spoke to him. By tacit agreement they pretended to ignore each other. But he never lost a word of what they said

as they talked across him. His silence seemed unfriendly to Louisa. Sabine never thought it so: but it would make her shy, and she would grow confused in her remarks. Then she would find some excuse for going in.

For a whole week Louisa was kept indoors by a cold. Christopher and Sabine were left alone. The first time they were frightened by it. Sabine, to seem at her ease, took her little girl on her knees and loaded her with caresses. Christopher was embarrassed and did not know whether he ought to go on ignoring what was happening at his side. It became difficult: although they had not spoken a single word to each other, they did know each other, thanks to Louisa. He tried to begin several times: but the words stuck in his throat. Once more the little girl extricated them from their difficulty. She played hide-and-seek, and went round Christopher's chair. He caught her as she passed and kissed her. He was not very fond of children: but it was curiously pleasant to him to kiss the little girl. She struggled to be free, for she was busy with her game. He teased her, she bit his hands: he let her fall. Sabine laughed. They looked at the child and exchanged a few trivial words. Then Christopher tried—(he thought he must)—to enter into conversation: but he had nothing very much to go upon: and Sabine did not make his task any the easier: she only repeated what he said:

"It is a fine evening."

"Yes. It is a very fine evening."

"Impossible to breathe in the yard."

"Yes. The yard was stifling."

Conversation became very difficult. Sabine discovered that it was time to take the little girl in, and went in herself: and she did not appear again.

Christopher was afraid she would do the same on the evenings that followed and that she would avoid being left alone with him, as long as Louisa was not there. But on the contrary, the next evening Sabine tried to resume their conversation. She did so deliberately rather than for pleasure: she was obviously taking a great deal of trouble to find subjects of conversation, and bored with the questions she put: questions and answers came between heartbreaking silences. Christopher remembered his first interviews with Otto: but with Sabine their subjects were even more limited than then, and she had

not Otto's patience. When she saw the small success of her endeavours she did not try any more: she had to give herself too much trouble, and she lost interest in it. She said no more, and he followed her lead.

And then there was sweet peace again. The night was calm once more, and they returned to their inward thoughts. Sabine rocked slowly in her chair, dreaming. Christopher also was dreaming. They said nothing. After half an hour Christopher began to talk to himself, and in a low voice cried out with pleasure in the delicious scent brought by the soft wind that came from a cart of strawberries. Sabine said a word or two in reply. Again they were silent. They were enjoying the charm of these indefinite silences, and trivial words. Their dreams were the same, they had but one thought: they did not know what it was: they did not admit it to themselves. At eleven they smiled and parted.

Next day they did not even try to talk: they resumed their sweet silence. At long intervals a word or two let them know that they were thinking of the same things.

Sabine began to laugh.

"How much better it is," she said, "not to try to talk! One thinks one must, and it is so tiresome!"

"Ah!" said Christopher with conviction, "if only everybody thought the same."

They both laughed. They were thinking of Frau Vogel.

"Poor woman!" said Sabine, "how exhausting she is!"

"She is never exhausted," replied Christopher gloomily.

She was tickled by his manner and his jest.

"You think it amusing?" he asked. "That is easy for you. You are sheltered."

"So I am," said Sabine. "I lock myself in." She had a little soft laugh that hardly sounded. Christopher heard it with delight in the calm of the evening. He snuffed the fresh air luxuriously.

"Ah! It is good to be silent!" he said, stretching his limbs.

"And talking is no use!" said she.

"Yes," returned Christopher, "we understand each other so well!"

They relapsed into silence. In the darkness they could not see each other. They were both smiling.

And yet, though they felt the same, when they were to-

gether—or imagined that they did—in reality they knew nothing of each other. Sabine did not bother about it. Christopher was more curious. One evening he asked her:

"Do you like music?"

"No," she said simply. "It bores me. I don't understand it."

Her frankness charmed him. He was sick of the lies of people who said that they were mad about music, and were bored to death when they heard it: and it seemed to him almost a virtue not to like it and to say so. He asked if Sabine read.

"No. She had no books."

He offered to lend her his.

"Serious books?" she asked uneasily.

"Not serious books if she did not want them. Poetry."

"But those are serious books."

"Novels, then."

She pouted.

"They don't interest you?"

"Yes. She was interested in them: but they were always too long: she never had the patience to finish them. She forgot the beginning: skipped chapters and then lost the thread. And then she threw the book away."

"Fine interest you take!"

"Bah! Enough for a story that is not true. She kept her interest for better things than books."

"For the theatre, then?"

"No. . . . No."

"Didn't she go to the theatre?"

"No. It was too hot. There were too many people. So much better at home. The lights tired her eyes. And the actors were so ugly!"

He agreed with her in that. But there were other things in the theatre: the play, for instance.

"Yes," she said absently. "But I have no time."

"What do you do all day?"

She smiled.

"There is so much to do."

"True," said he. "There is your shop."

"Oh!" she said calmly. "That does not take much time."

"Your little girl takes up your time then?"

"Oh! no, poor child! She is very good and plays by herself."

"Then?"

He begged pardon for his indiscretion. But she was amused by it.

"There are so many things."

"What things?"

"She could not say. All sorts of things. Getting up, dressing, thinking of dinner, cooking dinner, eating dinner, thinking of supper, cleaning her room.... And then the day was over.... And besides you must have a little time for doing nothing!"

"And you are not bored?"

"Never."

"Even when you are doing nothing?"

"Especially when I am doing nothing. It is much worse doing something: that bores me."

They looked at each other and laughed.

"You are very happy!" said Christopher. "I can't do anything."

"It sems to me that you know how."

"I have been learning lately."

"Ah! well, you'll learn."

When he left off talking to her he was at his ease and comfortable. It was enough for him to see her. He was rid of his anxieties, and irritations, and the nervous trouble that made him sick at heart. When he was talking to her he was beyond care: and so when he thought of her. He dared not admit it to himself: but as soon as he was in her presence, he was filled with a delicious soft emotion that brought him almost to unconsciousness. At night he slept as he had never done.

When he came back from his work he would look into the shop. It was not often that he did not see Sabine. They bowed and smiled. Sometimes she was at the door and then they would exchange a few words: and he would open the door and call the little girl and hand her a packet of sweets.

One day he decided to go in. He pretended that he wanted some waistcoat buttons. She began to look for them: but she could not find them. All the buttons were mixed up: it was impossible to pick them out. She was a little put out that he should see her untidiness. He laughed at it and bent over the better to see it.

"No," she said, trying to hide the drawers with her hands. "Don't look! It is a dreadful muddle. . . ."

She went on looking. But Christopher embarrassed her. She was cross, and as she pushed the drawer back she said:

"I can't find any. Go to Lisi, in the next street. She is sure to have them. She has everything that people want."

He laughed at her way of doing business.

"Do you send all your customers away like that?"

"Well. You are not the first," said Sabine warmly.

And yet she was a little ashamed.

"It is too much trouble to tidy up," she said. "I put off doing it from day to day. . . . But I shall certainly do it tomorrow."

"Shall I help you?" asked Christopher.

She refused. She would gladly have accepted: but she dared not, for fear of gossip. And besides it humiliated her.

They went on talking.

"And your buttons?" she said to Christopher a moment later. "Aren't you going to Lisi?"

"Never," said Christopher. "I shall wait until you have tidied up."

"Oh!" said Sabine, who had already forgotten what she had just said, "don't wait all that time!"

Her frankness delighted them both.

Christopher went to the drawer that she had shut.

"Let me look."

She ran to prevent his doing so.

"No, no, please. I am sure I haven't any."

"I bet you have."

At once he found the button he wanted, and was triumphant. He wanted others. He wanted to go on rummaging: but she snatched the box from his hands, and, hurt in her vanity, she began to look herself.

The light was fading. She went to the window. Christopher sat a little away from her: the little girl clambered on to his knees. He pretended to listen to her chatter and answered her absently. He was looking at Sabine and she knew that he was looking at her. She bent over the box. He could see her neck and a little of her cheek. And as he looked he saw that she was blushing. And he blushed too.

The child went on talking. No one answered her. Sabine did not move. Christopher could not see what she was doing: he

was sure she was doing nothing: she was not even looking at the box in her hands. The silence went on and on. The little girl grew uneasy and slipped down from Christopher's knees.

"Why don't you say anything?"

Sabine turned sharply and took her in her arms. The box was spilled on the floor: the little girl shouted with glee and ran on hands and knees after the buttons rolling under the furniture. Sabine went to the window again and laid her cheek against the pane. She seemed to be absorbed in what she saw outside.

"Good night!" said Christopher, ill at ease. She did not turn her head, and said in a low voice:

"Good night!"

On Sundays the house was empty during the afternoon. The whole family went to Church for Vespers. Sabine did not go. Christopher jokingly reproached her with it once when he saw her sitting at her door in the little garden, while the lovely bells were bawling themselves hoarse summoning her. She replied in the same tone that only Mass was compulsory: not Vespers: it was then no use, and perhaps a little indiscreet to be too zealous: and she liked to think that God would be rather pleased than angry with her.

"You have made God in your own image," said Christopher.

"I should be so bored if I were in His place," replied she with conviction.

"You would not bother much about the world if you were in His place."

"All that I should ask of it would be that it should not bother itself about me."

"Perhaps it would be none the worse for that," said Christopher.

"Tssh!" cried Sabine, "we are being irreligious."

"I don't see anything irreligious in saying that God is like you. I am sure He is flattered."

"Will you be silent!" said Sabine, half laughing, half angry. She was beginning to be afraid that God would be scandalised. She quickly turned the conversation.

"Besides," she said, "it is the only time in the week when one can enjoy the garden in peace."

"Yes," said Christopher. "They are gone." They looked at each other.

"How silent it is," muttered Sabine. "We are not used to it. One hardly knows where one is. . . ."

"Oh!" cried Christopher suddenly and angrily.

"There are days when I would like to strangle her!" There was no need to ask of whom he was speaking.

"And the others?" asked Sabine gaily.

"True," said Christopher a little abashed. "There is Rosa."

"Poor child!" said Sabine.

They were silent.

"If only it were always as it is now!" sighed Christopher.

She raised her laughing eyes to his, and then dropped them. He saw that she was working.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

(The fence of ivy that separated the two gardens was between them.)

"Look!" she said, lifting a basin that she was holding in her lap. "I am shelling peas."

She sighed.

"But that is not unpleasant," he said, laughing.

"Oh!" she replied, "it is disgusting, always having to think of dinner."

"I bet that if it were possible," he said "you would go without your dinner rather than have the trouble of cooking it."

"That's true," cried she.

"Wait! I'll come and help you."

He climbed over the fence and came to her.

She was sitting in a chair in the door. He sat on a step at her feet. He dipped into her lap for handfuls of green pods: and he poured the little round peas into the basin that Sabine held between her knees. He looked down. He saw Sabine's black stockings clinging to her ankles and feet—one of her feet was half out of its shoe. He dared not raise his eyes to look at her.

The air was heavy. The sky was dull and clouds hung low: there was no wind. No leaf stirred. The garden was enclosed within high walls: there was no world beyond them.

The child had gone out with one of the neighbours. They were alone. They said nothing. They could say nothing. Without looking he went on taking handfuls of peas from Sabine's

lap: his fingers trembled as he touched her: among the fresh smooth pods they met Sabine's fingers, and they trembled too. They could not go on. They sat still, not looking at each other: she leaned back in her chair with her lips half open and her arms hanging: he sat at her feet leaning against her: along his shoulder and arm he could feel the warmth of Sabine's leg. They were breathless. Christopher laid his hands against the stones to cool them: one of his hands touched Sabine's foot, that she had thrust out of her shoe, and he left it there, could not move it. They shivered. They almost lost control. Christopher's hand closed on the slender toes of Sabine's little foot. Sabine turned cold, the sweat broke out on her brow, she leaned towards Christopher....

Familiar voices broke the spell. They trembled. Christopher leaped to his feet and crossed the fence again. Sabine picked up the shells in her lap and went in. In the yard he turned. She was at her door. They looked at each other. Drops of rain were beginning to patter on the leaves of the trees.... She closed her door. Frau Vogel and Rosa came in.... He went up to his room....

In the yellow light of the waning day drowned in the torrents of rain, he got up from his desk in response to an irresistible impulse: he ran to his window and held out his arms to the opposite window. At the same moment through the opposite window in the half-darkness of the room he saw—he thought he saw—Sabine holding out her arms to him.

He rushed from his room. He went downstairs. He ran to the garden fence. At the risk of being seen he was about to clear it. But when he looked at the window at which she had appeared, he saw that the shutters were closed. The house seemed to be asleep. He stopped. Old Euler, going to his cellar, saw him and called him. He retraced his footsteps. He thought he must have been dreaming.

It was not long before Rosa began to see what was happening. She had no diffidence and she did not yet know what jealousy was. She was ready to give wholly and to ask nothing in return. But if she was sorrowfully resigned to not being loved by Christopher, she had never considered the possibility of Christopher loving another.

One evening, after dinner, she had just finished a piece of

embroidery at which she had been working for months. She was happy, and wanted, just for once, to leave her work and go and talk to Christopher. She waited until her mother's back was turned and then slipped from the room. She crept from the house like a truant. She wanted to go and confound Christopher, who had vowed scornfully that she would never finish her work. She thought it would be a good joke to go and take them by surprise in the street. It was no use the poor child knowing how Christopher felt towards her: she was always inclined to measure the pleasure which others should have at seeing her by that which she had herself in meeting them.

She went out. Christopher and Sabine were sitting as usual in front of the house. There was a catch at Rosa's heart. And yet she did not stop for the irrational idea that was in her: and she chaffed Christopher warmly. The sound of her shrill voice in the silence of the night struck on Christopher like a false note. He started in his chair, and frowned angrily. Rosa waved her embroidery in his face triumphantly. Christopher snubbed her impatiently.

"It is finished—finished!" insisted Rosa.

"Oh! well—go and begin another," said Christopher curtly.

Rosa was crestfallen. All her delight vanished. Christopher went on crossly.

"And when you have done thirty, when you are very old, you will at least be able to say to yourself that your life has not been wasted!"

Rosa was near weeping.

"How cross you are, Christopher!" she said.

Christopher was ashamed and spoke kindly to her. She was satisfied with so little that she regained confidence: and she began once more to chatter noisily: she could not speak low, she shouted deafeningly, like everybody in the house. In spite of himself Christopher could not conceal his ill-humour. At first he answered her with a few irritated monosyllables: then he said nothing at all, turned his back on her, fidgeted in his chair, and ground his teeth as she rattled on. Rosa saw that he was losing his temper, and knew that she ought to stop: but she went on louder than ever. Sabine, a few yards away, in the dark, said nothing, watched the scene with ironic impassivity. Then she was weary and, feeling that the evening

was wasted, she got up and went in. Christopher only noticed her departure after she had gone. He got up at once and without ceremony went away a curt "Good evening."

Rosa was left alone in the street, and looked in bewilderment at the door by which he had just gone in. Tears came to her eyes. She rushed in, went up to her room without a sound, so as not to have to talk to her mother, undressed hurriedly, and when she was in her bed, buried under the clothes, sobbed and sobbed. She made an attempt to think over what had passed: she did not ask herself whether Christopher loved Sabine, or whether Christopher and Sabine could not bear her: she knew only that all was lost, that life was useless, that there was nothing left to her but death.

Next morning thought came to her once more with eternal illusive hope. She recalled the events of the evening and told herself that she was wrong to attach so much importance to them. No doubt Christopher did not love her: she was resigned to that, though in her heart she thought, though she did not admit the thought, that in the end she would win his love by her love for him. But what reason had she for thinking that there was anything between Sabine and him? How could he, so clever as he was, love a little creature whose insignificance and mediocrity were patent? She was reassured—but for that she did not watch Christopher any the less closely. She saw nothing all day, because there was nothing to see: but Christopher, seeing her prowling about him all day long without any sort of explanation, was peculiarly irritated by it. She set the crown on her efforts in the evening when she appeared again and sat with them in the street. The scene of the previous evening was repeated. Rosa talked alone. But Sabine did not wait so long before she went indoors: and Christopher followed her example. Rosa could no longer pretend that her presence was not unwelcome: but the unhappy girl tried to deceive herself. She did not perceive that she could have done nothing worse than to try so to impose on herself: and with her usual clumsiness she went on through the succeeding days.

Next day with Rosa sitting by his side Christopher waited in vain for Sabine to appear.

The day after Rosa was alone. They had given up the struggle. But she gained nothing by it save resentment from

Christopher, who was furious at being robbed of his beloved evenings, his only happiness. He was the less inclined to forgive her, for, being absorbed with his own feelings, he had no suspicion of Rosa's.

Sabine had known them for some time: she knew that Rosa was jealous even before she knew that she herself was in love: but she said nothing about it: and, with the natural cruelty of a pretty woman, who is certain of her victory, in quizzical silence she watched the futile efforts of her awkward rival.

Left mistress of the field of battle Rosa gazed piteously upon the results of her tactics. The best thing she could have done would have been not to persist, and to leave Christopher alone, at least for the time being: but that was not what she did: and as the worst thing she could have done was to talk to him about Sabine, that was precisely what she did.

With a fluttering at her heart, by way of sounding him, she said timidly that Sabine was pretty. Christopher replied curtly that she was very pretty. And although Rosa might have foreseen the reply she would provoke, her heart thumped when she heard him. She knew that Sabine was pretty: but she had never particularly remarked it: now she saw her for the first time with the eyes of Christopher: she saw her delicate features, her short nose, her fine mouth, her slender figure, her graceful movements.... Ah! how sad!... What would not she have given to possess Sabine's body, and live in it! She did not go closely into why it should be preferred to her own!... Her own!... What had she done to possess such a body? What a burden it was upon her. How ugly it seemed to her! It was odious to her. And to think that nothing but death could ever free her from it!... She was at once too proud and too humble to complain that she was not loved: she had no right to do so: and she tried even more to humble herself. But her instinct revolted.... No. It was not just!... Why should she have such a body, she, and not Sabine?... And why should Sabine be loved? What had she done to be loved?... Rosa saw her with no kindly eye, lazy, careless, egotistic, indifferent towards everybody, not looking after her house, or her child, or anybody, loving only herself, living only for sleeping, dawdling, and doing nothing.... And it was such a woman who pleased... who pleased Christo-

pher.... Christopher who was so severe, Christopher who was so discerning, Christopher whom she esteemed and admired more than anybody!... How could Christopher be blind to it? She could not help from time to time dropping an unkind remark about Sabine in his hearing. She did not wish to do so: but the impulse was stronger than herself. She was always sorry for it, for she was a kind creature and disliked speaking ill of anybody. But she was the more sorry because she drew down on herself such cruel replies as showed how much Christopher was in love. He did not mince matters. Hurt in his love, he tried to hurt in return: and succeeded. Rosa would make no reply and go out with her head bowed, and her lips tight pressed to keep from crying. She thought that it was her own fault, that she deserved it for having hurt Christopher by attacking the object of his love.

Her mother was less patient. Frau Vogel, who saw everything, and old Euler, also, had not been slow to notice Christopher's interviews with their young neighbour: it was not difficult to guess their romance. Their secret projects of one day marrying Rosa to Christopher were set at naught by it: and that seemed to them a personal affront from Christopher, although he was not supposed to know that they had disposed of him without consulting his wishes. But Amalia's despotism did not admit of ideas contrary to her own; and it seemed scandalous to her that Christopher should have disregarded the contemptuous opinion she had often expressed of Sabine. She did not hesitate to repeat it for his benefit. Whenever he was present she found some excuse for talking about her neighbour: she cast about for the most injurious things to say of her, things which might sting Christopher most cruelly: and with the crudity of her point of view and language she had no difficulty in finding them. The ferocious instinct of a woman, so superior to that of a man in the art of doing evil, as well as of doing good, made her insist less on Sabine's laziness and moral failings than on her uncleanliness. Her indiscreet and prying eye had watched through the window for proofs of it in the secret processes of Sabine's toilet: and she exposed them with coarse complacency. When from decency she could not say everything she left the more to be understood.

Christopher would go pale with shame and anger: he would go white as a sheet and his lips would quiver. Rosa, foreseeing

what must happen, would implore her mother to have done: she would even try to defend Sabine. But she only succeeded in making Amalia more aggressive.

And suddenly Christopher would leap from his chair. He would thump on the table and begin to shout that it was monstrous to speak so of a woman, to spy upon her, to expose her misfortunes: only an evil mind could so persecute a creature who was good, charming, quiet, keeping herself to herself, and doing no harm to anybody, and speaking no ill of anybody. But they were making a great mistake if they thought they could do her harm: they only made him more sympathetic and made her kindness shine forth only the more clearly.

Amalia would feel then that she had gone too far: but she was hurt by feeling it: and, shifting her ground, she would say that it was only too easy to talk of kindness: that the word was called in as an excuse for everything. Heavens! It was easy enough to be thought kind when you never bothered about anything or anybody, and never did your duty!

To which Christopher would reply that the first duty of all was to make life pleasant for others, but that there were people for whom duty meant only ugliness, unpleasantness, tiresomeness, and everything that interferes with the liberty of others and annoys and injures their neighbours, their servants, their families, and themselves. God save us from such people, and such a notion of duty, as from the plague! . . .

They would grow venomous. Amalia would be very bitter. Christopher would not budge an inch. And the result of it all was that henceforth Christopher made a point of being seen continually with Sabine. He would go and knock at her door. He would talk gaily and laugh with her. He would choose moments when Amalia and Rosa could see him. Amalia would avenge herself with angry words. But the innocent Rosa's heart was rent and torn by this refinement of cruelty: she felt that he detested them and wished to avenge himself; and she wept bitterly.

So Christopher, who had suffered so much from injustice, learned unjustly to inflict suffering.

Some time after that Sabine's brother, a miller at Landegg, a little town a few miles away, was to celebrate the christening of a child. Sabine was to be godmother. She invited Christo-

pher. He had no liking for these functions: but for the pleasure of annoying the Vogels and of being with Sabine he accepted eagerly.

Sabine gave herself the malicious satisfaction of inviting Amalia and Rosa also, being quite sure that they would refuse. They did. Rosa was longing to accept. She did not dislike Sabine: sometimes even her heart was filled with tenderness for her because Christopher loved her: sometimes she longed to tell her so and to throw her arms about her neck. But there was her mother and her mother's example. She stiffened herself in her pride and refused. Then, when they had gone, and she thought of them together, happy together, driving in the country on the lovely July day, while she was left shut up in her room with a pile of linen to mend, with her mother grumbling by her side, she thought she must choke: and she cursed her pride. Oh! if there were still time! ... Alas! if it were all to do again, she would have done the same. ...

The miller had sent his waggonette to fetch Christopher and Sabine. They took up several guests from the town and the farms on the road. It was fresh dry weather. The bright sun made the red berries of the brown trees by the road and the wild cherry trees in the fields shine. Sabine was smiling. Her pale face was rosy under the keen wind. Christopher had her little girl on his knees. They did not try to talk to each other: they talked to their neighbours without caring to whom or of what: they were glad to hear each other's voices: they were glad to be driving in the same carriage. They looked at each other in childish glee as they pointed out to each other a house, a tree, a passer-by. Sabine loved the country: but she hardly ever went into it: her incurable laziness made excursions impossible: it was almost a year since she had been outside the town: and so she delighted in the smallest things she saw. They were not new to Christopher: but he loved Sabine, and like all lovers he saw everything through her eyes, and felt all her thrills of pleasure, and all and more than the emotion that was in her: for, merging himself into his beloved, he endowed her with all that he was himself.

When they came to the mill they found in the yard all the people of the farm and the other guests, who received them with a deafening noise. The fowls, the ducks, and the dogs joined in. The miller, Bertold, a great fair-haired fellow,

square of head and shoulders, as big and tall as Sabine was slight, took his little sister in his arms and put her down gently as though he were afraid of breaking her. It was not long before Christopher saw that the little sister, as usual, did just as she liked with the giant, and that while he made heavy fun of her whims and her laziness and her thousand and one failings, he was at her feet, her slave. She was used to it, and thought it natural. She did nothing to win love: it seemed to her right that she should be loved: and if she were not, did not care: that is why everybody loved her.

Christopher made another discovery not so pleasing. For a christening a godfather is necessary as well as a godmother, and the godfather has certain rights over the godmother, rights which he does not often renounce, especially when she is young and pretty. He learned this suddenly when he saw a farmer, with fair curly hair, and rings in his ears, go up to Sabine laughing and kiss her on both cheeks. Instead of telling himself that he was an ass to have forgotten this privilege, and more than an ass to be huffy about it, he was cross with Sabine, as though she had deliberately drawn him into the snare. His crossness grew worse when he found himself separated from her during the ceremony. Sabine turned round every now and then as the procession wound across the fields and threw him a friendly glance. He pretended not to see it. She felt that he was annoyed, and guessed why: but it did not trouble her: it amused her. If she had had a real squabble with someone she loved, in spite of all the pain it might have caused her, she would never have made the least effort to break down any misunderstanding: it would have been too much trouble. Everything would come right if it were only left alone.

At dinner, sitting between the miller's wife and a fat girl with red cheeks whom he had escorted to the service without ever paying any attention to her, it occurred to Christopher to turn and look at his neighbour: and, finding her comely, out of revenge, he flirted desperately with her with the idea of catching Sabine's attention. He succeeded: but Sabine was not the sort of woman to be jealous of anybody or anything: so long as she was loved, she did not care whether her lover did or did not pay court to others: and instead of being angry, she was delighted to see Christopher amusing himself. From

the other end of the table she gave him her most charming smile. Christopher was disgruntled: there was no doubt then that Sabine was indifferent to him: and he relapsed into his sulky mood from which nothing could draw him, neither the soft eyes of his neighbour, nor the wine that he drank. Finally, when he was half asleep, he asked himself angrily what on earth he was doing at such an interminable orgy, and did not hear the miller propose a trip on the water to take certain of the guests home. Nor did he see Sabine beckoning to him to come with her so that they should be in the same boat. When it occurred to him, there was no room for him: and he had to go in another boat. This fresh mishap was not likely to make him more amiable until he discovered that he was to be rid of almost all his companions on the way. Then he relaxed and was pleasant. Besides the pleasant afternoon on the water, the pleasure of rowing, the merriment of those good people, rid him of his ill-humour. As Sabine was no longer there he lost his self-consciousness, and had no scruple about being frankly amused like the others.

They were in their boats. They followed each other closely, and tried to pass each other. They threw laughing insults at each other. When the boats bumped Christopher saw Sabine's smiling face: and he could not help smiling too: they felt that peace was made. He knew that very soon they would return together.

They began to sing part songs. Each voice took up a line in turn and the refrain was taken up in chorus. The people in the different boats, some way from each other, now echoed each other. The notes skimmed over the water like birds. From time to time a boat would go into the bank: a few peasants would climb out: they would stand there and wave to the boats as they went farther and farther away. Little by little they were disbanded. One by one voices left the chorus. At last they were alone, Christopher, Sabine, and the miller.

They came back in the same boat, floating down the river. Christopher and Bertold held the oars, but they did not row. Sabine sat in the stern facing Christopher, and talked to her brother and looked at Christopher. Talking so, they were able to look at each other undisturbedly. They could never have done so had the words ceased to flow. The deceitful words seemed to say: "It is not you that I see." But their eyes

said to each other: "Who are you? Who are you? You that I love! . . . You that I love, whoever you be!" . . .

The sky was clouded, mists rose from the fields, the river steamed, the sun went down behind the clouds. Sabine shivered and wrapped her little black shawl round her head and shoulders. She seemed to be tired. As the boat, hugging the bank, passed under the spreading branches of the willows, she closed her eyes: her thin face was pale: her lips were sorrowful: she did not stir, she seemed to suffer—to have suffered—to be dead. Christopher's heart ached. He leaned over to her. She opened her eyes again and saw Christopher's uneasy eyes upon her and she smiled into them. It was like a ray of sunlight to him. He asked in a whisper.

"Are you ill?"

She shook her head and said:

"I am cold."

The two men put their overcoats about her, wrapped up her feet, her legs, her knees, like a child being tucked up in bed. She suffered it and thanked them with her eyes. A fine, cold rain was beginning to fall. They took the oars and went quietly home. Heavy clouds hung in the sky. The river was inky black. Lights showed in the windows of the houses here and there in the fields. When they reached the mill the rain was pouring down and Sabine was numbed.

They lit a large fire in the kitchen and waited until the deluge should be over. But it only grew worse, and the wind rose. They had to drive three miles to get back to the town. The miller declared that he would not let Sabine go in such weather: and he proposed that they should both spend the night in the farmhouse. Christopher was reluctant to accept: he looked at Sabine for counsel: but her eyes were fixed on the fire on the hearth: it was as though they were afraid of influencing Christopher's decision. But when Christopher had said "Yes," she turned to him and she was blushing—(or was it the reflection of the fire?)—and he saw that she was pleased.

A jolly evening. . . . The rain stormed outside. In the black chimney the fire darted jets of golden sparks. They spun round and round. Their fantastic shapes were marked against the wall. The miller showed Sabine's little girl how to make shadows with her hands. The child laughed and was not altogether at her ease. Sabine leaned over the fire and poked it

mechanically with a heavy pair of tongs: she was a little weary, and smiled dreamily, while, without listening, she nodded to her sister-in-law's chatter of her domestic affairs. Christopher sat in the shadow by the miller's side and watched Sabine smiling. He knew that she was smiling at him. They never had an opportunity of being alone all evening, or of looking at each other: they sought none.

They parted early. Their rooms were adjoining, and communicated by a door. Christopher examined the door and found that the lock was on Sabine's side. He went to bed and tried to sleep. The rain was pattering against the windows. The wind howled in the chimney. On the floor above him a door was banging. Outside the window a poplar bent and groaned under the tempest. Christopher could not close his eyes. He was thinking that he was under the same roof, near her. Only a wall divided them. He heard no sound in Sabine's room. But he thought he could see her. He sat up in his bed and called to her in a low voice through the wall: tender, passionate words he said: he held out his arms to her. And it seemed to him that she was holding out her arms to him. In his heart he heard the beloved voice answering him, repeating his words, calling low to him: and he did not know whether it was he who asked and answered all the questions, or whether it was really she who spoke. The voice came louder, the call to him: he could not resist: he leaped from his bed: he groped his way to the door: he did not wish to open it: he was reassured by the closed door. And when he laid his hand once more on the handle he found that the door was opening....

He stopped dead. He closed it softly: he opened it once more: he closed it again. Was it not closed just now? Yes. He was sure it was. Who had opened it? ... His heart beat so that he choked. He leaned over his bed, and sat down to breathe again. He was overwhelmed by his passion. It robbed him of the power to see or hear or move: his whole body shook. He was in terror of this unknown joy for which for months he had been craving, which was with him now, near him, so that nothing could keep it from him. Suddenly the violent boy filled with love was afraid of these desires newly realised and revolted from them. He was ashamed of them, ashamed

of what he wished to do. He was too much in love to dare to enjoy what he loved: he was afraid: he would have done anything to escape his happiness. Is it only possible to love, to love, at the cost of the profanation of the beloved? . . .

He went to the door again: and trembling with love and fear, with his hand on the latch he could not bring himself to open it.

And on the other side of the door, standing barefooted on the tiled floor, shivering with cold, was Sabine.

So they stayed . . . for how long? Minutes? Hours? . . . They did not know that they were there: and yet they did know. They held out their arms to each other—he was overwhelmed by a love so great that he had not the courage to enter—she called to him, waited for him, trembled lest he should enter. . . . And when at last he made up his mind to enter, she had just made up her mind to turn the lock again.

Then he cursed himself for a fool. He leaned against the door with all his strength. With his lips to the lock he implored her:

"Open."

He called to Sabine in a whisper: she could hear his heated breathing. She stayed motionless near the door: she was frozen: her teeth were chattering: she had no strength either to open the door or to go to bed again. . . .

The storm made the trees crack and the doors in the house bang. . . . They turned away and went to their beds, worn out, sad and sick at heart. The cocks crowed huskily. The first light of dawn crept through the wet windows, a wretched, pale dawn, drowned in the persistent rain. . . .

Christopher got up as soon as he could: he went down to the kitchen and talked to the people there. He was in a hurry to be gone and was afraid of being left alone with Sabine again. He was almost relieved when the miller's wife said that Sabine was unwell, and had caught cold during the drive and would not be going that morning.

His journey home was melancholy. He refused to drive, and walked through the soaking fields, in the yellow mist that covered the earth, the trees, the houses, with a shroud. Like the light, life seemed to be blotted out. Everything loomed like a spectre. He was like a spectre himself.

At home he found angry faces. They were all scandalised at his having passed the night God knows where with Sabine. He shut himself up in his room and applied himself to his work. Sabine returned the next day and shut herself up also. They avoided meeting each other. The weather was still wet and cold: neither of them went out. They saw each other through their closed windows. Sabine was wrapped up by her fire, dreaming. Christopher was buried in his papers. They bowed to each other a little coldly and reservedly and then pretended to be absorbed again. They did not take stock of what they were feeling: they were angry with each other, with themselves, with things generally. The night at the farmhouse had been thrust aside in their memories: they were ashamed of it, and did not know whether they were more ashamed of their folly or of not having yielded to it. It was painful to them to see each other: for that made them remember things from which they wished to escape: and by joint agreement they retired into the depths of their rooms, so as utterly to forget each other. But that was impossible, and they suffered keenly under the secret hostility which they felt was between them. Christopher was haunted by the expression of dumb rancour which he had once seen in Sabine's cold eyes. From such thoughts her suffering was not less: in vain did she struggle against them, and even deny them: she could not rid herself of them. They were augmented by her shame that Christopher should have guessed what was happening within her: and the shame of having offered herself . . . the shame of having offered herself without having given.

Christopher gladly accepted an opportunity which cropped up to go to Cologne and Düsseldorf for some concerts. He was glad to spend two or three weeks away from home. Preparation for the concerts and the composition of a new work that he wished to play at them took up all his time, and he succeeded in forgetting his obstinate memories. They disappeared from Sabine's mind too, and she fell back into the torpor of her usual life. They came to think of each other with indifference. Had they really loved each other? They doubted it. Christopher was on the point of leaving for Cologne without saying good-bye to Sabine.

On the evening before his departure they were brought together again by some imperceptible influence. It was one of

the Sunday afternoons when everybody was at church. Christopher had gone out to make his final preparations for the journey. Sabine was sitting in her tiny garden warming herself in the last rays of the sun. Christopher came home: he was in a hurry and his first inclination when he saw her was to bow and pass on. But something held him back as he was passing: was it Sabine's paleness, or some indefinable feeling: remorse, fear, tenderness? . . . He stopped, turned to Sabine, and, leaning over the fence, he bade her good evening. Without replying she held out her hand. Her smile was all kindness—such kindness as he had never seen in her. Her gesture seemed to say: "Peace between us. . . ." He took her hand over the fence, bent over it, and kissed it. She made no attempt to withdraw it. He longed to go down on his knees and say, "I love you." . . . They looked at each other in silence. But they offered no explanation. After a moment she removed her hand and turned her head. He turned too to hide his emotion. Then they looked at each other again with untroubled eyes. The sun was setting. Subtle shades of colour, violet, orange, and mauve, chased across the cold clear sky. She shivered and drew her shawl closer about her shoulders with a movement that he knew well. He asked: "How are you?"

She made a little grimace, as if the question were not worth answering. They went on looking at each other and were happy. It was as though they had lost, and had just found each other again. . . .

At last he broke the silence and said:

"I am going away tomorrow."

There was alarm in Sabine's eyes.

"Going away?" she said.

He added quickly:

"Oh! only for two or three weeks."

"Two or three weeks," she said in dismay.

He explained that he was engaged for the concerts, but that when he came back he would not stir all winter.

"Winter," she said. "That is a long time off. . . ."

"Oh! no. It will soon be here."

She saddened and did not look at him.

"When shall we meet again?" she asked a moment later.

He did not understand the question: he had already answered it.

"As soon as I come back: in a fortnight, or three weeks at most."

She still looked dismayed. He tried to tease her:

"It won't be long for you," he said. "You will sleep."

"Yes," said Sabine.

She looked down, she tried to smile: but her eyelids trembled.

"Christopher! . . ." she said suddenly, turning towards him.

There was a note of distress in her voice. She seemed to say:

"Stay! Don't go! . . ."

He took her hand, looked at her, did not understand the importance she attached to his fortnight's absence: but he was only waiting for a word from her to say:

"I will stay. . . ."

And just as she was going to speak, the front door was opened and Rosa appeared. Sabine withdrew her hand from Christopher's and went hurriedly into her house. At the door she turned and looked at him once more—and disappeared.

Christopher thought he should see her again in the evening. But he was watched by the Vogels, and followed everywhere by his mother: as usual, he was behindhand with his preparations for his journey, and could not find time to leave the house for a moment.

Next day he left very early. As he passed Sabine's door he longed to go in, to tap at the window: it hurt him to leave her without saying good-bye: for he had been interrupted by Rosa before he had had time to do so. But he thought she must be asleep and would be cross with him if he woke her up. And then, what could he say to her? It was too late now to abandon his journey: and what if she were to ask him to do so? . . . He did not admit to himself that he was not averse to exercising his power over her—if need be, causing her a little pain. . . . He did not take seriously the grief that his departure brought Sabine: and he thought that his short absence would increase the tenderness which, perhaps, she had for him.

He ran to the station. In spite of everything he was a little remorseful. But as soon as the train had started it was all forgotten. There was youth in his heart. Gaily he saluted the old town with its roofs and towers rosy under the sun: and

with the carelessness of those who are departing he said good-bye to those whom he was leaving, and thought no more of them.

The whole time that he was at Düsseldorf and Cologne Sabine never once recurred to his mind. Taken up from morning till night with rehearsals and concerts, dinners and talk, busied with a thousand and one new things and the pride and satisfaction of his success, he had no time for recollection. Once only, on the fifth night after he left home, he woke suddenly after a dream and knew that he had been thinking of *her* in his sleep and that the thought of *her* had wakened him up: but he could not remember how he had been thinking of her. He was unhappy and feverish. It was not surprising: he had been playing at a concert that evening, and when he left the hall he had been dragged off to a supper at which he had drunk several glasses of champagne. He could not sleep and got up. He was obsessed by a musical idea. He pretended that it was that which had broken in upon his sleep, and he wrote it down. As he read it through he was astonished to see how sad it was. There was no sadness in him when he wrote: at least, so he thought. But he remembered that on other occasions when he had been sad he had only been able to write joyous music, so gay that it offended his mood. He gave no more thought to it. He was used to the surprises of his inner world without ever being able to understand them. He went to sleep at once, and knew no more until the next morning.

He extended his stay by three or four days. It pleased him to prolong it, knowing he could return whenever he liked: he was in no hurry to go home. It was only when he was on the way, in the train, that the thought of Sabine came back to him. He had not written to her. He was even careless enough never to have taken the trouble to ask at the post office for any letters that might have been written to him. He took a secret delight in his silence: he knew that at home he was expected, that he was loved.... Loved? She had never told him so: he had never told her so. No doubt they knew it and had no need to tell it. And yet there was nothing so precious as the certainly of such an avowal. Why had they waited so long to make it? When they had been on the point of speaking always something—some mischance, shyness, embarrassment—had hindered them. Why? Why? How much time they had lost! ...

He longed to hear the dear words from the lips of the beloved. He longed to say them to her: he said them aloud in the empty carriage. As he neared the town he was torn with impatience, a sort of agony.... Faster! Faster! Oh! To think that in an hour he would see her again!...

It was half-past six in the morning when he reached home. Nobody was up yet. Sabine's windows were closed. He went into the yard on tiptoe so that she should not hear him. He chuckled at the thought of taking her by surprise. He went up to his room. His mother was asleep. He washed and brushed his hair without making any noise. He was hungry: but he was afraid of waking Louisa by rummaging in the pantry. He heard footsteps in the yard: he opened his window softly and saw Rosa, first up as usual, beginning to sweep. He called her gently. She started in glad surprise when she saw him: then she looked solemn. He thought she was still offended with him: but for the moment he was in a very good temper. He went down to her.

"Rosa, Rosa," he said gaily, "give me something to eat or I shall eat you! I am dying of hunger!"

Rosa smiled and took him to the kitchen on the ground floor. She poured him out a bowl of milk and then could not refrain from plying him with a string of questions about his travels and his concerts. But although he was quite ready to answer them—(in the happiness of his return he was almost glad to hear Rosa's chatter once more)—Rosa stopped suddenly in the middle of her cross-examination, her face fell, her eyes turned away, and she became sorrowful. Then her chatter broke out again: but soon it seemed that she thought it out of place and once more she stopped short. And he noticed it then and said:

"What is the matter, Rosa? Are you cross with me?"

She shook her head violently in denial, and turning towards him with her usual suddenness took his arm with both hands:

"Oh! Christopher!..." she said.

He was alarmed. He let his piece of bread fall from his hands.

"What! What is the matter?" he stammered.

She said again:

"Oh! Christopher!... Such an awful thing has happened!"

He thrust away from the table. He stuttered:

"H—here?"

She pointed to the house on the other side of the yard.

He cried:

"Sabine!"

She wept:

"She is dead."

Christopher saw nothing. He got up: he almost fell: he clung to the table, upset the things on it: he wished to cry out. He suffered fearful agony. He turned sick.

Rosa hastened to his side: she was frightened: she held his head and wept.

As soon as he could speak he said:

"It is not true!"

He knew that it was true. But he wanted to deny it, he wanted to pretend that it could not be. When he saw Rosa's face wet with tears he could doubt no more and he sobbed aloud.

Rosa raised her head:

"Christopher!" she said.

He hid his face in his hands. She leaned towards him.

"Christopher! . . . Mamma is coming! . . ."

Christopher got up.

"No, no," he said. "She must not see me."

She took his hand and led him, stumbling and blinded by his tears, to a little woodshed which opened on to the yard. She closed the door. They were in darkness. He sat on a block of wood used for chopping sticks. She sat on the faggots. Sounds from without were deadened and distant. There he could weep without fear of being heard. He let himself go and sobbed furiously. Rosa had never seen him weep: she had even thought that he could not weep: she knew only her own girlish tears and such despair in a man filled her with terror and pity. She was filled with a passionate love for Christopher. It was an absolutely unselfish love: an immense need of sacrifice, a maternal self-denial, a hunger to suffer for him, to take his sorrow upon herself. She put her arm round his shoulders.

"Dear Christopher," she said, "do not cry!"

Christopher turned from her.

"I wish to die!"

Rosa clasped her hands.

"Don't say that, Christopher!"

"I wish to die. I cannot . . . cannot live now. . . . What is the good of living?"

"Christopher, dear Christopher! You are not alone. You are loved. . . ."

"What is that to me? I love nothing now. It is nothing to me whether everything else lives or dies. I love nothing: I loved only her. I loved only her!"

He sobbed louder than ever with his face buried in his hands. Rosa could find nothing to say. The egotism of Christopher's passion stabbed her to the heart. Now when she thought herself most near to him, she felt more isolated and more miserable than ever. Grief instead of bringing them together thrust them only the more widely apart. She wept bitterly.

After some time, Christopher stopped weeping and asked:

"How? . . . How? . . ."

Rosa understood.

"She fell ill of influenza on the evening you left. And she was taken suddenly. . . ."

He groaned.

"Dear God! . . . Why did you not write to me?"

She said:

"I did write. I did not know your address: you did not give us any. I went and asked at the theatre. Nobody knew it."

He knew how timid she was, and how much it must have cost her. He asked:

"Did she . . . did she tell you to do that?"

She shook her head:

"No. But I thought . . ."

He thanked her with a look. Rosa's heart melted.

"My poor . . . poor Christopher!" she said.

She flung her arms round his neck and wept. Christopher felt the worth of such pure tenderness. He had so much need of consolation! He kissed her:

"How kind you are," he said. "You loved her too?"

She broke away from him, she threw him a passionate look, did not reply, and began to weep again.

That look was a revelation to him. It meant:

"It was not she whom I loved. . . ."

Christopher saw at last what he had not known—what for months he had not wished to see. He saw that she loved him.

"Ssh," she said. "They are calling me." They heard Amalia's voice.

Rosa asked:

"Do you want to go back to your room?"

He said:

"No. I could not yet: I could not bear to talk to my mother.... Later on...."

She said:

"Stay here. I will come back soon."

He stayed in the dark woodshed to which only a thread of light penetrated through a small air-hole filled with cobwebs. From the street there came up the cry of a hawker, against the wall a horse in a stable next door was snorting and kicking. The revelation that had just come to Christopher gave him no pleasure: but it held his attention for a moment. It made plain many things that he had not understood. A multitude of little things that he had disregarded occurred to him and were explained. He was surprised to find himself thinking of it: he was ashamed to be turned aside even for a moment from his misery. But that misery was so frightful, so irrepressible, that the instinct of self-preservation, stronger than his will, than his courage, than his love, forced him to turn away from it, seized on this new idea, as the suicide drowning seizes in spite of himself on the first object which can help him, not to save himself, but to keep himself for a moment longer above the water. And it was because he was suffering that he was able to feel what another was suffering—suffering through him. He understood the tears that he had brought to her eyes. He was filled with pity for Rosa. He thought how cruel he had been to her—how cruel he must still be. For he did not love her. What good was it for her to love him? Poor girl!... In vain did he tell himself that she was good (she had just proved it). What was her goodness to him? What was her life to him?...

He thought:

"Why is it not she who is dead, and the other who is alive?"

He thought:

"She is alive: she loves me: she can tell me that today, tomorrow, all my life: and the other, the woman I love, she is dead and never told me that she loved me: I never have told her that I loved her: I shall never hear her say it: she will never know it...."

And suddenly he remembered that last evening: he remembered that they were just going to talk when Rosa came and prevented it. And he hated Rosa.

The door of the woodshed was opened. Rosa called Christopher softly, and groped towards him. She took his hand. He felt an aversion in her near presence: in vain did he reproach himself for it: it was stronger than himself.

Rosa was silent: her great pity had taught her silence. Christopher was grateful to her for not breaking in upon his grief with useless words. And yet he wished to know... she was the only creature who could talk to him of *her*. He asked in a whisper:

"When did she..."

(He dared not say: die.)

She replied:

"Last Saturday week."

Dimly he remembered. He said:

"At night?"

Rosa looked at him in astonishment and said:

"Yes. At night. Between two and three."

The sorrowful melody came back to him. He asked, trembling:

"Did she suffer much?"

"No, no. God be thanked, dear Christopher: she hardly suffered at all. She was so weak. She did not struggle against it. Suddenly they saw that she was lost..."

"And she... did she know it?"

"I don't know. I think..."

"Did she say anything?"

"No. Nothing. She was sorry for herself like a child."

"You were there?"

"Yes. For the first two days I was there alone, before her brother came."

He pressed her hand in gratitude.

"Thank you."

She felt the blood rush to her heart.

After a silence he spoke, he murmured the question which was choking him:

"Did she say anything... for me?"

Rosa shook her head sadly. She would have given much to be able to let him have the answer he expected: she was almost

sorry that she could not lie about it. She tried to console him:

"She was not conscious."

"But she did speak?"

"One could not make out what she said. It was in a very low voice."

"Where is the child?"

"Her brother took her away with him to the country."

"And *she?*"

"She is there too. She was taken away last Monday week."

They began to weep again.

Frau Vogel's voice called Rosa once more. Christopher, left alone again, lived through those days of death. A week, already a week ago.... O God! What had become of her? How it had rained that week!... And all that time he was laughing, he was happy!

In his pocket he felt a little parcel wrapped up in soft paper: they were silver buckles that he had brought her for her shoes. He remembered the evening when he had placed his hand on the little stockinged foot. Her little feet: where were they now? How cold they must be!... He thought the memory of that warm contact was the only one that he had of the beloved creature. He had never dared to touch her, to take her in his arms, to hold her to his breast. She was gone for ever, and he had never known her. He knew nothing of her, neither soul nor body. He had no memory of her body, of her life, of her love.... Her love?... What proof had he of that?... He had not even a letter, a token—nothing. Where could he seek to hold her, in himself, or outside himself?... Oh! Nothing! There was nothing left him but the love he had for her, nothing left him but himself. And in spite of all, his desperate desire to snatch her from destruction, his need of denying death, made him cling to the last piece of wreckage, in an act of blind faith:

"*...Ne son gio morto; e ben c'albergo cangi, resto in te vivo, c'or mi vedi e piangi, se l'un nell' altro amante si trasforma.*"

"...I am not dead: I have changed my dwelling. I live still in thee who seest me in thy tears. The soul of the beloved is merged in the soul of the lover."

He had never read these sublime words: but they were in him. Each one of us in turn climbs the Calvary of the ages. Each one of us finds anew the agony, each one of us finds anew the desperate hope and folly of the ages. Each one of us follows in the footsteps of those who were, of those before us who struggled with death, denied death—and are dead.

He shut himself up in his room. His shutters were closed all day so as not to see the windows of the house opposite. He avoided the Vogels: they were odious to his sight. He had nothing to reproach them with: they were too honest, and too pious not to have thrust back their feelings in the face of death. They knew Christopher's grief and respected it, whatever they might think of it: they never uttered Sabine's name in his presence. But they had been her enemies when she was alive: that was enough to make him their enemy now that she was dead.

Besides they had not altered their noisy habits: and in spite of the sincere though passing pity that they had felt, it was obvious that at bottom they were untouched by the misfortune—(it was too natural)—perhaps even they were secretly relieved by it. Christopher imagined so at least. Now that the Vogels' intentions with regard to himself were made plain he exaggerated them in his own mind. In reality they attached little importance to him; he set too great store by himself. But he had no doubt that the death of Sabine, by removing the greatest obstacle in the way of his landlord's plans, did seem to them to leave the field clear for Rosa. So he detested her. That they—(the Vogels, Louisa, and even Rosa)— should have tacitly disposed of him, without consulting him, was enough in any case to make him lose all affection for the person whom he was destined to love. He shied whenever he thought an attempt was made upon his umbrageous sense of liberty. But now it was not only a question of himself. The rights which these others had assumed over him did not only infringe upon his own rights, but upon those of the dead woman to whom his heart was given. So he defended them doggedly, although no one was for attacking them. He suspected Rosa's goodness. She suffered in seeing him suffer and would often come and knock at his door to console him and talk to him about the other. He did not drive her away: he needed to talk of Sabine

with someone who had known her: he wanted to know the smallest detail of what had happened during her illness. But he was not grateful to Rosa: he attributed ulterior motives to her. Was it not plain that her family, even Amalia, permitted these visits and long colloquies which she would never have allowed if they had not fallen in with her wishes? Was not Rosa in league with her family? He could not believe that her pity was absolutely sincere and free of personal thoughts.

And, no doubt, it was not. Rosa pitied Christopher with all her heart. She tried hard to see Sabine through Christopher's eyes, and through him to love her: she was angry with herself for all the unkind feelings that she had ever had towards her, and asked her pardon in her prayers at night. But could she forget that she was alive, that she was seeing Christopher every moment of the day, that she loved him, that she was no longer afraid of the other, that the other was gone, that her memory would also fade away in its turn, that she was left alone, that one day perhaps...? In the midst of her sorrow, and the sorrow of her friend, more hers than her own, could she repress a glad impulse, an unreasoning hope? For that too she was angry with herself. It was only a flash. It was enough. He saw it. He threw her a glance which froze her heart: she read in it hateful thoughts: he hated her for being alive while the other was dead.

The miller brought his cart for Sabine's little furniture. Coming back from a lesson Christopher saw heaped up before the door in the street the bed, the cupboard, the mattress, the linen, all that she had possessed, all that was left of her. It was a dreadful sight to him. He rushed past it. In the doorway he bumped into Bertold, who stopped him.

"Ah! my dear sir," he said, shaking his hand effusively. "Ah! who would have thought it when we were together? How happy we were! And yet it was because of that day, because of that cursed row on the water, that she fell ill. Oh! well. It is no use complaining! She is dead. It will be our turn next. That is life.... And how are you? I'm very well, thank God!"

He was red in the face, sweating, and smelled of wine. The idea that he was her brother, that he had rights in her memory, hurt Christopher. It offended him to hear this man talking of his beloved. The miller on the contrary was glad to find a friend with whom he could talk of Sabine: he did not understand

Christopher's coldness. He had no idea of all the sorrow that his presence, the sudden calling to mind of the day at his farm, the happy memories that he recalled so blunderingly, the poor relics of Sabine, heaped upon the ground, which he kicked as he talked, set stirring in Christopher's soul. He made some excuse for stopping Bertold's tongue. He went up the steps: but the other clung to him, stopped him, and went on with his harangue. At last when the miller took to telling him of Sabine's illness, with that strange pleasure which certain people, and especially the common people, take in talking of illness, with a plethora of painful details, Christopher could bear it no longer (he took a tight hold of himself so as not to cry out in his sorrow). He cut him short:

"Pardon," he said curtly and icily. "I must leave you."

He left him without another word.

His insensibility revolted the miller. He had guessed the secret affection of his sister and Christopher. And that Christopher should now show such indifference seemed monstrous to him: he thought he had no heart.

Christopher had fled to his room: he was choking. Until the removal was over he never left his room. He vowed that he would never look out of the window, but he could not help doing so: and hiding in a corner behind the curtain he followed the departure of the goods and chattels of the beloved eagerly and with profound sorrow. When he saw them disappearing for ever he all but ran down to the street to cry: "No! no! Leave them to me! Do not take them from me!" He longed to beg at least for some little thing, only one little thing, so that she should not altogether be taken from him. But how could he ask such a thing of the miller? It was nothing to him. She herself had not known his love: how dared he then reveal it to another? And besides, if he had tried to say a word he would have burst out crying.... No. No. He had to say nothing, to watch all go, without being able—without daring to save one fragment from the wreck....

And when it was all over, when the house was empty, when the yard gate was closed after the miller, when the wheels of his cart moved on, shaking the windows, when they were out of hearing, he threw himself on the floor—not a tear left in him, not a thought of suffering, of struggling, frozen, and like one dead.

There was a knock at the door. He did not move. Another knock. He had forgotten to lock the door. Rosa came in. She cried out on seeing him stretched on the floor and stopped in terror. He raised his head angrily:

"What? What do you want? Leave me!"

She did not go: she stayed, hesitating, leaning against the door, and said again:

"Christopher. . . ."

He got up in silence: he was ashamed of having been seen so. He dusted himself with his hand and asked harshly:

"Well. What do you want?"

Rosa said shyly:

"Forgive me . . . Christopher . . . I came in . . . I was bringing you . . ."

He saw that she had something in her hand.

"See," she said, holding it out to him. "I asked Bertold to give me a little token of her. I thought you would like it. . . ."

It was a little silver mirror, the pocket mirror in which she used to look at herself for hours, not so much from coquetry as from want of occupation. Christopher took it, took also the hand which held it.

"Oh! Rosa! . . ." he said.

He was filled with her kindness and the knowledge of his own injustice. On a passionate impulse he knelt to her and kissed her hand.

"Forgive . . . Forgive . . ." he said.

Rosa did not understand at first: then she understood only too well: she blushed, she trembled, she began to weep. She understood that he meant:

"Forgive me if I am unjust. . . . Forgive me if I do not love you. . . . Forgive me if I cannot . . . if I cannot love you, if I can never love you! . . ."

She did not withdraw her hand from him: she knew that it was not herself that he was kissing. And with his cheek against Rosa's hand, he wept hot tears, knowing that she was reading through him: there was sorrow and bitterness in being unable to love her and making her suffer.

They stayed so, both weeping, in the dim light of the room.

At last she withdrew her hand. He went on murmuring:

"Forgive! . . ."

She laid her hand gently on his hand. He rose to his feet.

They kissed in silence: they felt on their lips the bitter savour of their tears.

"We shall always be friends," he said softly. She bowed her head and left him, too sad to speak.

They thought that the world is ill made. The lover is unloved. The beloved does not love. The lover who is loved is sooner or later torn from his love.... There is suffering. There is the bringing of suffering. And the most wretched is not always the one who suffers.

Once more Christopher took to avoiding the house. He could not bear it. He could not bear to see the curtainless windows, the empty rooms.

A worse sorrow awaited him. Old Euler lost no time in re-letting the ground floor. One day Christopher saw strange faces in Sabine's room. New lives blotted out the traces of the life that was gone.

It became impossible for him to stay in his rooms. He passed whole days outside, not coming back until nightfall, when it was too dark to see anything. Once more he took to making expeditions in the country. Irresistibly he was drawn to Bertold's farm. But he never went in, dared not go near it, wandered about it at a distance. He discovered a place on a hill from which he could see the house, the plain, the river: it was thither that his steps usually turned. From there he could follow with his eyes the meanderings of the water down to the willow clump under which he had seen the shadow of death pass across Sabine's face. From there he could pick out the two windows of the rooms in which they had waited, side by side, so near, so far, separated by a door—the door to eternity. From there he could survey the cemetery. He had never been able to bring himself to enter it: from childhood he had had a horror of those fields of decay and corruption, and refused to think of those whom he loved in connection with them. But from a distance and seen from above, the little graveyard never looked grim, it was calm, it slept under the sun.... Sleep!... She loved to sleep! Nothing would disturb her there. The crowing cocks answered each other across the plains. From the homestead rose the roaring of the mill, the clucking of the poultry yard, the cries of children playing. He could make out Sabine's little girl, he could see her run-

ning, he could mark her laughter. Once he lay in wait for her near the gate of the farmyard, in a turn of the sunken road made by the walls: he seized her as she passed and kissed her. The child was afraid and began to cry. She had almost forgotten him already. He asked her:

"Are you happy here?"

"Yes. It is fun. . . ."

"You don't want to come back?"

"No!"

He let her go. The child's indifference plunged him in sorrow. Poor Sabine! . . . And yet it was she, something of her. . . . So little! The child was hardly at all like her mother: had lived in her, but was not she: in that mysterious passage through her being the child had hardly retained more than the faintest perfume of the creature who was gone: inflections of her voice, a pursing of the lips, a trick of bending the head. The rest of her was another being altogether: and that being mingled with the being of Sabine was repulsive to Christopher, though he never admitted it to himself.

It was only in himself that Christopher could find the image of Sabine. It followed him everywhere, hovering above him: but he only felt himself really to be with her when he was alone. Nowhere was she nearer to him than in this refuge, on the hill, far from strange eyes, in the midst of the country that was so full of the memory of her. He would go miles to it, climbing at a run, his heart beating as though he were going to a meeting with her: and so it was indeed. When he reached it he would lie on the ground—the same earth in which *her* body was laid: he would close his eyes: and *she* would come to him. He could not see her face: he could not hear her voice: he had no need: she entered into him, held him, he possessed her utterly. In this state of passionate hallucination he would lose the power of thought, he would be unconscious of what was happening: he was unconscious of everything save that he was with her.

That state of things did not last long. To tell the truth he was only once altogether sincere. From the day following, his will had its share in the proceedings. And from that time on Christopher tried in vain to bring it back to life. It was only then that he thought of evoking in himself the face and form of Sabine: until then he had never thought of it. He succeeded

spasmodically and he was fired by it. But it was only at the cost of hours of waiting and of darkness.

"Poor Sabine!" he would think. "They have all forgotten you. There is only I who love you, who keep your memory alive for ever. Oh, my treasure, my precious! I have you, I hold you, I will never let you go! . . ."

He spoke these words because already she was escaping him: she was slipping from his thoughts like water through his fingers. He would return again and again, faithful to the tryst. He wished to think of her and he would close his eyes. But after half an hour, or an hour, or sometimes two hours, he would begin to see that he had been thinking of nothing. The sounds of the valley, the roar of the wind, the little bells of the goats browsing on the hill, the noise of the wind in the little slender trees under which he lay, were sucked up by his thoughts soft and porous like a sponge. He was angry with his thoughts: they tried to obey him, and to fix the vanished image to which he was striving to attach his life: but his thoughts fell back weary and chastened and once more with a sigh of comfort abandoned themselves to the listless stream of sensations.

He shook off his torpor. He strode through the country hither and thither seeking Sabine. He sought her in the mirror that once had held her smile. He sought her by the river bank where her hands had dipped in the water. But the mirror and the water gave him only the reflection of himself. The excitement of walking, the fresh air, the beating of his own healthy blood awoke music in him once more. He wished to find change.

"Oh! Sabine! . . ." he sighed.

He dedicated songs to her: he strove to call her to life in his music, his love and his sorrow. . . . In vain: love and sorrow came to life surely: but poor Sabine had no share in them. Love and sorrow looked towards the future, not towards the past. Christopher was powerless against his youth. The sap of life welled up again in him with new vigour. His grief, his regrets, his chaste and ardent love, his baffled desires, heightened the fever that was in him. In spite of his sorrow, his heart beat in lively, sturdy rhythm: wild songs leaped forth in mad, intoxicated strains: everything in him hymned life and even sadness took on a festal shape. Christopher was

too frank to persist in self-deception: and he despised himself. But life swept him headlong: and in his sadness, with death in his heart, and life in all his limbs, he abandoned himself to the forces newborn in him, to the absurd, delicious joy of living, which grief, pity, despair, the aching wound of an irreparable loss, all the torment of death, can only sharpen and kindle into being in the strong, as they dig their sides with furious spur.

And Christopher knew that, in himself, in the secret hidden depths of his soul, he had an inaccessible and inviolable sanctuary where lay the shadow of Sabine. That the flood of life could not bear away.... Each of us bears in his soul as it were a little graveyard of those whom he has loved. They sleep there, through the years, untroubled. But a day comes—this we know—when the graves shall reopen. The dead issue from the tomb and smile with their pale lips—loving, always—on the beloved, and the lover, in whose breast their memory dwells, like the child sleeping in the mother's womb.

III

ADA

After the wet summer the autumn was radiant. In the orchards the trees were weighed down with fruit. The red apples shone like billiard-balls. Already some of the trees were taking on their brilliant garb of the falling year: flame colour, fruit colour, colour of ripe melon, of oranges and lemons, of good cooking, and fried dishes. Misty lights glowed through the woods: and from the meadows there rose the little pink flames of the saffron.

He was going down a hill. It was a Sunday afternoon. He was striding, almost running, gaining speed down the slope. He was singing a phrase, the rhythm of which had been obsessing him all through his walk. He was red, dishevelled: he was walking, swinging his arms, and rolling his eyes like a madman, when as he turned a bend in the road he came suddenly on a fair girl perched on a wall tugging with all her might at a branch of a tree from which she was greedily plucking and eating purple plums. Their astonishment was mutual. She

looked at him, stared, with her mouth full. Then she burst out laughing. So did he. She was good to see with her round face framed in fair curly hair, which was like a sunlit cloud about her, her full pink cheeks, her wide blue eyes, her rather large nose, impertinently turned up, her little red mouth showing white teeth—the canine little, strong, and projecting—her plump chin, and her full figure, large and plump, well built, solidly put together. He called out:

"Good eating!" And was for going on his road. But she called to him:

"Sir! Sir! Will you be very nice? Help me to get down. I can't . . ."

He returned and asked her how she had climbed up.

"With my hands and feet. . . . It is easy enough to get up. . . ."

"Especially when there are tempting plums hanging above your head. . . ."

"Yes. . . . But when you have eaten your courage goes. You can't find the way to get down."

He looked at her on her perch. He said:

"You are all right there. Stay there quietly. I'll come and see you tomorrow. Good night!"

But he did not budge, and stood beneath her. She pretended to be afraid, and begged him with little glances not to leave her. They stayed looking at each other and laughing. She showed him the branch to which she was clinging and asked:

"Would you like some?"

Respect for property had not developed in Christopher since the days of his expeditions with Otto: he accepted without hesitation. She amused herself with pelting him with plums. When he had eaten she said:

"Now! . . ."

He took a wicked pleasure in keeping her waiting. She grew impatient on her wall. At last he said:

"Come, then!" and held his hands up to her.

But just as she was about to jump down she thought a moment.

"Wait! We must make provision first!"

She gathered the finest plums within reach and filled the front of her blouse with them.

"Carefully! Don't crush them!"

He felt almost inclined to do so.

She lowered herself from the wall and jumped into his arms. Although he was sturdy he bent under her weight and all but dragged her down. They were of the same height. Their faces came together. He kissed her lips, moist and sweet with the juice of the plums: and she returned his kiss without more ceremony.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"I don't know."

"Are you out alone?"

"No. I am with friends. But I have lost them.... Hi! Hi!" she called suddenly as loudly as she could.

No answer.

She did not bother about it any more. They began to walk, at random, following their noses.

"And you ... where are you going?" said she.

"I don't know, either."

"Good. We'll go together."

She took some plums from her gaping blouse and began to munch them.

"You'll make yourself sick," he said.

"Not I! I've been eating them all day."

Through the gap in her blouse he saw the white of her chemise.

"They are all warm now," she said.

"Let me see!"

She held him one and laughed. He ate it. She watched him out of the corner of her eye as she sucked at the fruit like a child. He did not know how the adventure would end. It is propbable that she at least had some suspicion. She waited.

"Hi! Hi!" Voices in the woods.

"Hi! Hi!" she answered. "Ah! There they are!" she said to Christopher. "Not a bad thing, either!"

But on the contrary she was thinking that it was rather a pity. But speech was not given to woman for her to say what she is thinking.... Thank God! for there would be an end of morality on earth....

The voice came near. Her friends were near the road. She leaped the ditch, climbed the hedge, and hid behind the trees. He watched her in amazement. She signed to him imperiously

to come to her. He followed her. She plunged into the depths of the wood.

"Hi! Hi!" she called once more when they had gone some distance. "You see, they must look for me!" she explained to Christopher.

Her friends had stopped on the road and were listening for her voice to mark where it came from. They answered her and in their turn entered the woods. But she did not wait for them. She turned about on right and on left. They bawled loudly after her. She let them, and then went and called in the opposite direction. At last they wearied of it, and, making sure that the best way of making her come was to give up seeking her, they called:

"Good-bye!" and went off singing.

She was furious that they should not have bothered about her any more than that. She had tried to be rid of them: but she had not counted on their going off so easily. Christopher looked rather foolish: this game of hide-and-seek with a girl whom he did not know did not exactly enthrall him: and he had no thought of taking advantage of their solitude. Nor did she think of it: in her annoyance she forgot Christopher.

"Oh! It's too much," she said, thumping her hands together. "They have left me."

"But," said Christopher, "you wanted them to."

"Not at all."

"You ran away."

"If I run away from them that is my affair, not theirs. They ought to look for me. What if I were lost . . .?"

Already she was beginning to be sorry for herself because of what might have happened if . . . if the opposite of what actually had occurred had come about.

"Oh!" she said. "I'll make them . . .!" She turned back and strode off.

As she went she remembered Christopher and looked at him once more. But it was too late. She began to laugh. The little demon which had been in her the moment before was gone. While she was waiting for another to come she saw Christopher with the eyes of indifference. And then, she was hungry. Her stomach was reminding her that it was supper-time: she was in a hurry to rejoin her friends at the inn. She took Christopher's arm, leaned on it with all her weight, groaned, and

said that she was exhausted. That did not keep her from dragging Christopher down a slope, running, and shouting, and laughing like a mad thing.

They talked. She learned who he was: she did not know his name, and seemed not to be greatly impressed by his title of musician. He learned that she was a shop-girl from a dressmaker's in the *Kaiserstrasse* (the most fashionable street in the town): her name was Adelheid—to friends, Ada. Her companions on the excursion were one of her friends, who worked at the same place as herself, and two nice young men, a clerk at Weiller's bank, and a clerk from a big linen-draper's. They were turning their Sunday to account: they had decided to dine at the Brochet inn, from which there is a fine view over the Rhine, and then to return by boat.

The others had already established themselves at the inn when they arrived. Ada made a scene with her friends: she complained of their cowardly desertion and presented Christopher as her saviour. They did not listen to her complaints: but they knew Christopher, the bank clerk by reputation, the clerk from having heard some of his compositions (he thought it a good idea to hum an air from one of them immediately afterwards), and the respect which they showed him made an impression on Ada, the more so as Myrrha, the other young woman—(her real name was Hansi or Johanna)—a brunette with blinking eyes, bumpy forehead, hair screwed back, Chinese face, a little too animated, but clever and not without charm in spite of her goat-like head and her oily golden-yellow complexion—at once began to make advances to their *Hof Musicus*. They begged him to be so good as to honour their repast with his presence.

Never had he been in such high feather: for he was overwhelmed with attentions, and the two women, like good friends as they were, tried each to rob the other of him. Both courted him: Myrrha with ceremonious manners, sly looks, as she rubbed her leg against his under the table—Ada, openly making play with her fine eyes, her pretty mouth, and all the seductive resources at her command. Such coquetry in its almost coarseness embarrassed and distressed Christopher. These two bold young women were a change from the unkindly faces he was accustomed to at home. Myrrha interested him; he guessed her to be more intelligent than Ada: but her

obsequious manners and her ambiguous smile were curiously attractive and repulsive to him at the same time. She could do nothing against Ada's radiance of life and pleasure: and she was aware of it. When she saw that she had lost the bout, she abandoned the effort, turned in upon herself, went on smiling, and patiently waited for her day to come. Ada seeing herself mistress of the field did not seek to push forward the advantage she had gained: what she had done had been mainly to spite her friend: she had succeeded, she was satisfied. But she had been caught in her own game. She felt as she looked into Christopher's eyes the passion that she had kindled in him: and that same passion began to awake in her. She was silent: she left her vulgar teasing: they looked at each other in silence: on their lips they had the savour of their kiss. From time to time by fits and starts they joined vociferously in the jokes of the others: then they relapsed into silence, stealing glances at each other. At last they did not even look at each other, as though they were afraid of betraying themselves. Absorbed in themselves they brooded over their desire.

When the meal was over they got ready to go. They had to go a mile and a half through the woods to reach the pier. Ada got up first: Christopher followed her. They waited on the steps until the others were ready: without speaking, side by side, in the thick mist that was hardly at all lit up by the single lamp hanging by the inn door. Myrrha was dawdling by the mirror.

Ada took Christopher's hand and led him along the house towards the garden into the darkness. Under a balcony from which hung a curtain of vines they hid. All about them was dense darkness. They could not even see each other. The wind stirred the tops of the pines. He felt Ada's warm fingers entwined in his and the sweet scent of a heliotrope flower that she had at her breast.

Suddenly she dragged him to her: Christopher's lips found Ada's hair, wet with the mist, and kissed her eyes, her eyebrows, her nose, her cheeks, the corners of her mouth, seeking her lips, and finding them, staying pressed to them.

The others had gone. They called:

"Ada! . . ."

They did not stir, they hardly breathed, pressed close to each other, lips and bodies.

They heard Myrrha:

"They have gone on."

The footsteps of their companions died away in the night. They held each other closer, in silence, stifling on their lips a passionate murmuring.

In the distance a village clock rang out. They broke apart. They had to run to the pier. Without a word they set out, arms and hands entwined, keeping step—a little quick, firm step, like hers. The road was deserted: no creature was abroad: they could not see ten yards ahead of them: they went, serene and sure, into the beloved night. They never stumbled over the pebbles on the road. As they were late they took a short cut. The path led for some way down through vines and then began to ascend and wind up the side of the hill. Through the mist they could hear the roar of the river and the heavy paddles of the steamer approaching. They left the path and ran across the fields. At last they found themselves on the bank of the Rhine, but still far from the pier. Their serenity was not disturbed. Ada had forgotten her fatigue of the evening. It seemed to them that they could have walked all night like that, on the silent grass, in the hovering mists, that grew wetter and more dense along the river that was wrapped in a whiteness as of the moon. The steamer's siren hooted: the invisible monster plunged heavily away and away. They said, laughing:

"We will take the next."

By the edge of the river soft lapping waves broke at their feet. At the landing stage they were told:

"The last boat has just gone."

Christopher's heart thumped. Ada's hand grasped his arm more tightly.

"But," she said, "there will be another one tomorrow."

A few yards away in a halo of mist was the flickering light of a lamp hung on a post on a terrace by the river. A little farther on were a few lighted windows—a little inn.

They went into the tiny garden. The sand ground under their feet. They groped their way to the steps. When they entered, the lights were being put out. Ada, on Christopher's arm, asked for a room. The room to which they were led opened on to the little garden. Christopher leaned out of the window and saw the phosphorescent glow of the river, and the shade of the lamp on the glass of which were crushed

mosquitoes with large wings. The door was closed. Ada was standing by the bed and smiling. He dared not look at her. She did not look at him: but through her lashes she followed Christopher's every movement. The floor creaked with every step. They could hear the least noise in the house. They sat on the bed and embraced in silence.

The flickering light of the garden is dead. All is dead....

Night.... The abyss.... Neither light nor consciousness.... Being. The obscure, devouring forces of Being. Joy all-powerful. Joy rending. Joy which sucks down the human creature as the void a stone. The spout of desire sucking up thought. The absurd delicious law of the blind intoxicated worlds which go rolling through the night....

... A night which is many nights, hours that are centuries, seconds, which are death.... Dreams shared, words spoken with eyes closed, tears and laughter, the happiness of loving in the voice, of sharing the nothingness of sleep, the swiftly passing images floating in the brain, the hallucinations of the roaring night.... The Rhine laps in a little creek by the house: in the distance his waters over the dams and breakwaters make a sound as of a gentle rain falling on sand. The hull of the boat creaks and groans under the weight of water. The chain by which it is tied sags and grows taut with a rusty clattering. The voice of the river rises: it fills the room. The bed is like a boat. They are swept along side by side by a giddy current—hung in mid-air like a soaring bird. The night grows ever more dark, the void more empty. Ada weeps, Christopher loses consciousness: both are swept down under the flowing waters of the night....

Night.... Death.... Why wake to life again?...

The light of the dawning day peeps through the dripping panes. The spark of life glows once more in their languorous bodies. He awakes. Ada's eyes are looking at him. A whole life passes in a few moments: days of sun, greatness, and peace...

"Where am I? And am I two? Do I still exist? I am no longer conscious of being. All about me is the infinite: I have the soul of at statue, with large tranquil eyes, filled with Olympian peace...."

They fall back into the world of sleep. And the familiar

sounds of the dawn, the distant bells, a passing boat, oars, dripping water, footsteps on the road, all caress without disturbing their happy sleep, reminding them that they are alive, and making them delight in the savour of their happiness....

The puffing of the steamer outside the window brought Christopher from his torpor. They had agreed to leave at seven, so as to return to the town in time for their usual occupations. He whispered:

"Do you hear?"

She did not open her eyes; she smiled, she put out her lips, she tried to kiss him and then let her head fall back on his shoulder.... Through the window-panes he saw the funnel of the steamer slip by against the sky, he saw the empty deck, and clouds of smoke. Once more he slipped into dreaminess....

An hour passed without his knowing it. He heard it strike and started in astonishment.

"Ada!..." he whispered to the girl. "Ada!" he said again. "It's eight o'clock."

Her eyes were still closed; she frowned and pouted pettishly.

"Oh! let me sleep!" she said.

She sighed wearily and turned her back on him and went to sleep once more.

He began to dream. His blood ran bravely, calmly through him. His limpid senses received the smallest impressions simply and freshly. He rejoiced in his strength and youth. Unwittingly he was proud of being a man. He smiled in his happiness, and felt himself alone: alone as he had always been, more lonely even, but without sadness, in a divine solitude. No more shadows. Nature could freely cast her reflection upon his soul in its serenity. Lying on his back, facing the window, his eyes gazing deep into the dazzling air with its luminous mists, he smiled:

"How good it is to live!..."

To live!... A boat passed.... He thought suddenly of those who were no longer alive, of a boat gone by on which they were together: he—she.... She?... Not that one, sleeping by his side. She, the only she, the beloved, the poor little woman who was dead. But is it that one? How came she there? How did they come to this room? He looks at her, he does not know her: she is a stranger to him: yesterday morning

she did not exist for him. What does he know of her?—He knows that she is not clever. He knows that she is not good. He knows that she is not even beautiful with her face spiritless and bloated with sleep, her low forehead, her mouth open in breathing, her swollen dried lips pouting like a fish. He knows that he does not love her. And he is filled with a bitter sorrow when he thinks that he kissed those strange lips, in the first moment with her, that he has taken this beautiful body for which he cares nothing on the first night of their meeting—and that she whom he loved, he watched her live and die by his side and never dared touch her hair with his lips, that he will never know the perfume of her being. Nothing more. All is crumbled away. The earth has taken all from him. And he never defended what was his. . . .

And while he leaned over the innocent sleeper and scanned her face, and looked at her with eyes of unkindness, she felt his eyes upon her. Uneasy under his scrutiny she made a great effort to raise her heavy lids and to smile: and she said, stammering a little like a waking child:

"Don't look at me. I'm ugly. . . ."

She fell back at once, weighed down with sleep; smiled once more, murmured:

"Oh! I'm so . . . so sleepy! . . ." and went off again into her dreams.

He could not help laughing: he kissed her childish lips more tenderly. He watched the girl sleeping for a moment longer, and got up quietly. She gave a comfortable sigh when he was gone. He tried not to wake her as he dressed, though there was no danger of that: and when he had done he sat in the chair near the window and watched the steaming smoking river which looked as though it were covered with ice: and he fell into a brown study in which there hovered music, pastoral, melancholy.

From time to time she half opened her eyes and looked at him vaguely, took a second or two, smiled at him, and passed from one sleep to another. She asked him the time.

"A quarter to nine."

Half asleep she pondered:

"What? Can it be a quarter to nine?"

At half-past nine she stretched, sighed, and said that she was going to get up.

It was ten o'clock before she stirred. She was petulant.

"Striking again! . . . The clock is fast! . . ." He laughed and went and sat on the bed by her side. She put her arms round his neck and told him her dreams. He did not listen very attentively and interrupted her with little love words. But she made him be silent and went on very seriously, as though she were telling something of the highest importance:

"She was at dinner: the Grand Duke was there: Myrrha was a Newfoundland dog. . . . No, a frizzy sheep who waited at table. . . . Ada had discovered a method of rising from the earth, of walking, dancing, and lying down in the air. You see it was quite simple: you had only to do . . . thus . . . thus . . . and it was done. . . ."

Christopher laughed at her. She laughed too, though a little ruffled at his laughing. She shrugged her shoulders.

"Ah! you don't understand! . . ."

They breakfasted on the bed from the same cup, with the same spoon.

At last she got up: she threw off the bedclothes and slipped down from the bed. Then she sat down to recover her breath and looked at her feet. Finally she clapped her hands and told him to go out: and as he was in no hurry about it she took him by the shoulders and thrust him out of the door and then locked it.

After she had dawdled, looked over and stretched each of her handsome limbs, she sang, as she washed, a sentimental *Lied* in fourteen couplets, threw water at Christopher's face—he was outside drumming on the window—and as they left she plucked the last rose in the garden and then they took the steamer. The mist was not yet gone: but the sun shone through it: they floated through a creamy light. Ada sat at the stern with Christopher: she was sleepy and a little sulky: she grumbled about the light in her eyes, and said that she would have a headache all day. And as Christopher did not take her complaint seriously enough she relapsed into morose silence. Her eyes were hardly opened and in them was the funny gravity of children who have just woken up. But at the next landing-stage an elegant lady came and sat not far from her, and she grew lively at once: she talked eagerly to Christopher about things sentimental and distinguished. She had resumed with him the ceremonious *Sie*.

Christopher was thinking about what she could say to her employer by way of excuse for her lateness. She was hardly at all concerned about it.

"Bah! It's not the first time."

"The first time that . . . what?"

"That I have been late," she said, put out by the question.

He dared not ask her what had caused her lateness.

"What will you tell her?"

"That my mother is ill, dead . . . how do I know?"

He was hurt by her talking so lightly.

"I don't want you to lie."

She took offence:

"First of all, I never lie. . . . And then, I cannot very well tell her . . ."

He asked her half in jest, half in earnest:

"Why not?"

She laughed, shrugged, and said that he was coarse and ill-bred, and that she had already asked him not to use the *Du* to her.

"Haven't I the right?"

"Certainly not."

"After what has happened?"

"Nothing has happened."

She looked at him a little defiantly and laughed: and, although she was joking, he felt most strongly that it would not have cost her much to say it seriously and almost to believe it. But some pleasant memory tickled her: for she burst out laughing and looked at Christopher and kissed him loudly without any concern for the people about, who did not seem to be in the least surprised by it.

Now on all his excursions he was accompanied by shop-girls and clerks: he did not like their vulgarity, and used to try to lose them: but Ada out of contrariness was no longer disposed for wandering in the woods. When it rained or for some other reason they did not leave the town he would take her to the theatre, or the museum, or the *Thiergarten:* for she insisted on being seen with him. She even wanted him to go to church with her; but he was so absurdly sincere that he would not set foot inside a church since he had lost his belief—(on some other excuse he had resigned his position as organist)—and at

the same time, unknown to himself, remained much too religious not to think Ada's proposal sacrilegious.

He used to go to her rooms in the evening. Myrrha would be there, for she lived in the same house. Myrrha was not at all resentful against him: she would hold out her soft hand caressingly, and talk of trivial and improper things and then slip away discreetly. The two women had never seemed to be such friends as since they had had small reason for being so: they were always together. Ada had no secrets from Myrrha: she told her everything: Myrrha listened to everything: they seemed to be equally pleased with it all.

Christopher was ill at ease in the company of the two women. Their friendship, their strange conversations, their freedom of manner, the crude way in which Myrrha especially viewed and spoke of things—(not so much in his presence, however, as when he was not there, but Ada used to repeat her sayings to him)—their indiscreet and impertinent curiosity, which was for ever turned upon subjects that were silly or basely sensual, the whole equivocal and rather animal atmosphere oppressed him terribly, though it interested him: for he knew nothing like it. He was at sea in the conversations of the two little beasts, who talked of dress, and made silly jokes, and laughed in an inept way with their eyes shining with delight when they were off on the track of some spicy story. He was more at ease when Myrrha left them. When the two women were together it was like being in a foreign country without knowing the language. It was impossible to make himself understood: they did not even listen: they poked fun at the foreigner.

When he was alone with Ada they went on speaking different languages: but at least they did make some attempt to understand each other. To tell the truth, the more he understood her, the less he understood her. She was the first woman he had known. For if poor Sabine was a woman he had known, he had known nothing of her: she had always remained for him a phantom of his heart. Ada took upon herself to make him make up for lost time. In his turn he tried to solve the riddle of woman: an enigma which perhaps is no enigma except for those who seek some meaning in it.

Ada was without intelligence: that was the least of her faults. Christopher would have commended her for it, if she

had approved it herself. But although she was occupied only with stupidities, she claimed to have some knowledge of the things of the spirit: and she judged everything with complete assurance. She would talk about music and explain to Christopher things which he knew perfectly, and would pronounce absolute judgment and sentence. It was useless to try to convince her: she had pretensions and susceptibilities in everything; she gave herself airs, she was obstinate, vain: she would not—she could not understand anything. Why would she not accept that she could understand nothing? He loved her so much better when she was content with being just what she was, simply, with her own qualities and failings, instead of trying to impose on others and herself!

In fact, she was little concerned with thought. She was concerned with eating, drinking, singing, dancing, crying, laughing, sleeping: she wanted to be happy: and that would have been all right if she had succeeded. But although she had every gift for it: she was greedy, lazy, sensual, and frankly egotistic in a way that revolted and amused Christopher: although she had almost all the vices which make life pleasant for their fortunate possessors, if not for their friends—(and even then does not a happy face, at least if it be pretty, shed happiness on all those who come near it?)—in spite of so many reasons for being satisfied with life and herself Ada was not even clever enough for that. The pretty, robust girl, fresh, hearty, healthy-looking, endowed with abundant spirits and fierce appetites, was anxious about her health. She bemoaned her weakness, while she ate enough for four. She was always sorry for herself: she could not drag herself along, she could not breathe, she had a headache, feet-ache, her eyes ached, her stomach ached, her soul ached. She was afraid of everything, and madly superstitious, and saw omens everywhere: at meals the crossing of knives and forks, the number of the guests, the upsetting of a salt-cellar: then there must be a whole ritual to turn aside misfortune. Out walking she would count the crows, and never failed to watch which side they flew to: she would anxiously watch the road at her feet, and when a spider crossed her path in the morning she would cry out aloud: then she would wish to go home and there would be no other means of not interrupting the walk than to persuade her that it was after twelve, and so the omen was one of hope rather than

of evil. She was afraid of her dreams: she would recount them at length to Christopher: for hours she would try to recollect some detail that she had forgotten; she never spared him one; absurdities piled one on the other, strange marriages, deaths, dressmakers' prices, burlesque, and sometimes obscene things. He had to listen to her and give her his advice. Often she would be for a whole day under the obsession of her inept fancies. She would find life ill-ordered, she would see things and people rawly and overwhelm Christopher with her jeremiads: and it seemed hardly worth while to have broken away from the gloomy middle-class people with whom he lived to find once more the eternal enemy: the "*trauriger ungriechischer Hypochondrist.*"

But suddenly in the midst of her sulks and grumblings, she would become gay, noisy, exaggerated: there was no more dealing with her gaiety than with her moroseness: she would burst out laughing for no reason and seem as though she were never going to stop: she would rush across the fields, play mad tricks and childish pranks, take a delight in doing silly things, in messing with the earth, and dirty things, and the beasts, and the spiders, and worms, in teasing them, and hurting them, and making them eat each other: the cats eat the birds, the fowls the worms, the ants the spiders, not from any wickedness, or perhaps from an altogether unconscious instinct for evil, from curiosity, or from having nothing better to do. She seemed to be driven always to say stupid things, to repeat senseless words again and again, to irritate Christopher, to exasperate him, set his nerves on edge, and make him almost beside himself. And her coquetry as soon as anybody—no matter who—appeared on the road! . . . Then she would talk excitedly, laugh noisily, make faces, draw attention to herself: she would assume an affected mincing gait. Christopher would have a horrible presentiment that she was going to plunge into serious discussion. And, indeed, she would do so. She would become sentimental, uncontrolledly, just as she did everything: she would unbosom herself in a loud voice. Christopher would suffer and long to beat her. Least of all could he forgive her lack of sincerity. He did not yet know that sincerity is a gift as rare as intelligence or beauty and that it cannot justly be expected of everybody. He could not bear a lie: and Ada gave him lies in full measure. She

was always lying, quite calmly, in spite of evidence to the contrary. She had that astounding faculty for forgetting what is displeasing to them—or even what has been pleasing to them—which those women possess who live from moment to moment.

And, in spite of everything, they loved each other with all their hearts. Ada was as sincere as Christopher in her love. Their love was none the less true for not being based on intellectual sympathy: it had nothing in common with base passion. It was the beautiful love of youth: it was sensual, but not vulgar, because it was altogether youthful: it was naïve, almost chaste, purged by the ingenuous ardour of pleasure. Although Ada was not, by a long way, so ignorant as Christopher, yet she had still the divine privilege of youth of soul and body, that freshness of the senses, limpid and vivid as a running stream, which almost gives the illusion of purity and through life is never replaced. Egotistic, commonplace, insincere in her ordinary life—love made her simple, true, almost good: she understood in love the joy that is to be found in self-forgetfulness. Christopher saw this with delight: and he would gladly have died for her. Who can tell all the absurd and touching illusions that a loving heart brings to its love! And the natural illusion of the lover was magnified a hundredfold in Christopher by the power of illusion which is born in the artist. Ada's smile held profound meanings for him: an affectionate word was the proof of the goodness of her heart. He loved in her all that is good and beautiful in the universe. He called her his own, his soul, his life. They wept together over their love.

Pleasure was not the only bond between them: there was an indefinable poetry of memories and dreams—their own? or those of the men and women who had loved before them, who had been before them—in them? . . . Without a word, perhaps without knowing it, they preserved the fascination of the first moments of their meeting in the woods, the first days, the first nights together: those hours of sleep in each other's arms, still, unthinking, sinking down into a flood of love and silent joy. Swift fancies, visions, dumb thoughts, titillating, and making them go pale, and their hearts sink under their desire, bringing all about them a buzzing as of bees. A fierce light, and tender. . . . Their hearts sink and beat no more, borne down in

excess of sweetness. Silence, languor, and fever, the mysterious weary smile of the earth quivering under the first sunlight of spring.... So fresh a love in two young creatures is like an April morning. Like April it must pass. Youth of the heart is like an early feast of sunshine.

Nothing could have brought Christopher closer to Ada in his love than the way in which he was judged by others.

The day after their first meeting it was known all over the town. Ada made no attempt to cover up the adventure, and rather preened herself on her conquest. Christopher would have liked more discretion: but he felt that the curiosity of the people was upon him: and as he did not wish to seem to fly from it, he threw in his lot with Ada. The little town buzzed with tattle. Christopher's colleagues in the orchestra paid him sly compliments to which he did not reply, because he would not allow any meddling with his affairs. The respectable people of the town judged his conduct very severely. He lost his music lessons with certain families. With others, the mothers thought that they must now be present at their daughters' lessons, watching with suspicious eyes, as though Christopher were intending to carry off the precious darlings. The young ladies were supposed to know nothing. Naturally they knew everything: and while they were cold towards Christopher for his lack of taste, they were longing to have further details. It was only among the small tradespeople, and the shop-people, that Christopher was popular: but not for long: he was just as annoyed by their approval as by the condemnation of the rest: and, being unable to do anything against that condemnation, he took steps not to keep their approval: there was no difficulty about that. He was furious with the general indiscretion.

The most indignant of all with him were Justus Euler and the Vogels. They took Christopher's misconduct as a personal outrage. They had not made any serious plans concerning him: they distrusted—especially Frau Vogel—these artistic temperaments. But as they were naturally discontented and always inclined to think themselves persecuted by fate, they persuaded themselves that they had counted on the marriage of Christopher and Rosa; as soon as they were quite certain that such a marriage would never come to pass, they saw in it

the mark of their usual ill-luck. Logically, if fate were responsible for their miscalculation, Christopher could not be: but the Vogels' logic was that which gave them the greatest opportunity for finding reasons for being sorry for themselves. So they decided that if Christopher had misconducted himself it was not so much for his own pleasure as to give offence to them. They were scandalised. Very religious, moral, and oozing domestic virtue, they were of those to whom the sins of the flesh are the most shameful, the most serious, almost the only sins, because they are the only deadly sins—(it is obvious that respectable people are never likely to be tempted to steal or murder). And so Christopher seemed to them absolutely wicked, and they changed their demeanour towards him. They were icy towards him and turned away as they passed him. Christopher, who was in no particular need of their conversation, shrugged his shoulders at all the fuss. He pretended not to notice Amalia's insolence: who, while she affected contemptuously to avoid him, did all that she could to make him fall in with her so that she might tell him all that was rankling in her.

Christopher was only touched by Rosa's attitude. The girl condemned him more harshly even than her family. Not that this new love of Christopher's seemed to her to destroy her last chances of being loved by him: she knew that she had no chance left—(although perhaps she went on hoping: she always hoped). But she had made an idol of Christopher: and that idol had crumbled away. It was the worst sorrow for her... yes, a sorrow more cruel to the innocence and honesty of her heart, than being disdained and forgotten by him. Brought up puritanically, with a narrow code of morality in which she believed passionately, what she had heard about Christopher had not only brought her to despair but had broken her heart. She had suffered already when he was in love with Sabine: she had begun then to lose some of her illusions about her hero. That Christopher could love so commonplace a creature seemed to her inexplicable and inglorious. But at least that love was pure, and Sabine was not unworthy of it. And in the end death had passed over it and sanctified it.... But that at once Christopher should love another woman—and such a woman!—was base, and odious! She took upon herself the defence of the dead woman against him. She could not forgive

him for having forgotten her. . . . Alas! He was thinking of her more than she: but she never thought that in a passionate heart there might be room for two sentiments at once: she thought it impossible to be faithful to the past without sacrifice of the present. Pure and cold, she had no idea of life or of Christopher: everything in her eyes was pure, narrow, submissive to duty, like herself. Modest of soul, modest of herself, she had only one source of pride: purity: she demanded it of herself and of others. She could not forgive Christopher for having so lowered himself, and she would never forgive him.

Christopher tried to talk to her, though not to explain himself (what could he say to her? what could he say to a little puritanical and naïve girl?). He would have liked to assure her that he was her friend, that he wished for her esteem, and had still the right to it. He wished to prevent her absurdly estranging herself from him.—But Rosa avoided him in stern silence: he felt that she despised him.

He was both sorry and angry. He felt that he did not deserve such contempt: and yet in the end he was bowled over by it: and thought himself guilty. Of all the reproaches cast against him the most bitter came from himself when he thought of Sabine. He tormented himself.

"Oh! God, how is it possible? What sort of creature am I? . . ."

But he could not resist the stream that bore him on. He thought that life is criminal: and he closed his eyes so as to live without seeing it. He had so great a need to live, and be happy, and love, and believe! . . . No: there was nothing despicable in his love! He knew that it was impossible to be very wise, or intelligent, or even very happy in his love for Ada: but what was there in it that could be called vile? Suppose (he forced the idea on himself) that Ada were not a woman of any great moral worth, how was the love that he had for her the less pure for that? Love is in the lover, not in the beloved. Everything is worthy of the lover, everything is worthy of love. To the pure all is pure. All is pure in the strong and the healthy of mind. Love, which adorns certain birds with their loveliest colours, calls forth from the souls that are true all that is most noble in them. The desire to show to the beloved only what is worthy makes the lover take pleasure only in those thoughts and actions which are in harmony

with the beautiful image fashioned by love. And the waters of youth in which the soul is bathed, the blessed radiance of strength and joy, are beautiful and health-giving, making the heart great.

That his friends misunderstood him filled him with bitterness. But the worst trial of all was that his mother was beginning to be unhappy about it.

The good creature was far from sharing the narrow views of the Vogels. She had seen real sorrows too nearly ever to try to invent others. Humble, broken by life, having received little joy from it, and having asked even less, resigned to everything that happened, without even trying to understand it, she was careful not to judge or censure others: she thought she had no right. She thought herself too stupid to pretend that they were wrong when they did not think as she did: it would have seemed ridiculous to try to impose on others the inflexible rules of her morality and belief. Besides that, her morality and her belief were purely instinctive: pious and pure in herself she closed her eyes to the conduct of others, with the indulgence of her class for certain faults and certain weaknesses. That had been one of the complaints that her father-in-law, Jean Michel, had lodged against her: she did not sufficiently distinguish between those who were honourable and those who were not: she was not afraid of stopping in the street or the market-place to shake hands and talk with young women, notorious in the neighbourhood, whom a respectable woman ought to pretend to ignore. She left it to God to distinguish between good and evil, to punish or to forgive. From others she asked only a little of that affectionate sympathy which is so necessary to soften the ways of life. If people were only kind she asked no more.

But since she had lived with the Vogels a change had come about in her. The disparaging temper of the family had found her an easier prey because she was crushed and had no strength to resist. Amalia had taken her in hand: and from morning to night when they were working together alone, and Amalia did all the talking, Louisa, broken and passive, unconsciously assumed the habit of judging and criticising everything. Frau Vogel did not fail to tell her what she thought of Christopher's conduct. Louisa's calmness irritated her. She thought it indecent of Louisa to be so little concerned

about what put him beyond the pale: she was not satisfied until she had upset her altogether. Christopher saw it. Louisa dared not reproach him: but every day she made little timid remarks, uneasy, insistent: and when he lost patience and replied sharply, she said no more: but still ne could see the trouble in her eyes: and when he came home sometimes he could see that she had been weeping. He knew his mother too well not to be absolutely certain that her uneasiness did not come from herself. And he knew well whence it came.

He determined to make an end of it. One evening when Louisa was unable to hold back her tears and had got up from the table in the middle of supper without Christopher being able to discover what was the matter, he rushed downstairs four steps at a time and knocked at the Vogels' door. He was boiling with rage. He was not only angry about Frau Vogel's treatment of his mother: he had to avenge himself for her having turned Rosa against him, for her bickering against Sabine, for all that he had had to put up with at her hands for months. For months he had borne his pent-up feelings against her and now made haste to let them loose.

He burst in on Frau Vogel, and in a voice that he tried to keep calm, though it was trembling with fury, he asked her what she had told his mother to bring her to such a state.

Amalia took it very badly: she replied that she would say what she pleased, and was responsible to no one for her actions—to him least of all. And, seizing the opportunity to deliver the speech which she had prepared, she added that if Louisa was unhappy he had to go no further for the cause of it than his own conduct, which was a shame to himself and a scandal to everybody else.

Christopher was only waiting for her onslaught to strike out. He shouted angrily that his conduct was his own affair, that he did not care a rap whether it pleased Frau Vogel or not, that if she wished to complain of it she must do so to him, and that she could say to him whatever she liked: that rested with her, but he *forbade* her (did she hear?) *forbade* her to say anything to his mother: it was cowardly and mean so to attack a poor sick old woman.

Frau Vogel cried loudly. Never had anyone dared to speak

to her in such a manner. She said that she was not to be lectured by a rapscallion—and in her own house, too! And she treated him with abuse.

The others came running up on the noise of the quarrel—except Vogel, who fled from anything that might upset his health. Old Euler was called to witness by the indignant Amalia, and sternly bade Christopher in future to refrain from speaking to or visiting them. He said that they did not need him to tell them what they ought to do, that they did their duty, and would always do it.

Christopher declared that he would go and would never again set foot in their house. However, he did not go until he had relieved his feelings by telling them what he had still to say about their famous Duty, which had become to him a personal enemy. He said that their Duty was the sort of thing to make him love vice. It was people like them who discouraged goodness, by insisting on making it unpleasant. It was their fault that so many find delight by contrast among those who are dishonest, but amiable and laughter-loving. It was a profanation of the name of duty to apply it to everything, to the most stupid tasks, to trivial things, with a stiff and arrogant severity which ends by darkening and poisoning life. Duty, he said, was exceptional: it should be kept for moments of real sacrifice, and not used to lend the lover of its name to ill-humour and the desire to be disagreeable to others. There was no reason, because they were stupid enough or ungracious enough to be sad, to want everybody else to be so too, and to impose on everybody their decrepit way of living.... The first of all virtues is joy. Virtue must be happy, free, and unconstrained. He who does good must give pleasure to himself. But this perpetual upstart Duty, this pedagogic tyranny, this peevishness, this futile discussion, this acrid, puerile quibbling, this ungraciousness, this charmless life, without politeness, without silence, this mean-spirited pessimism, which lets slip nothing that can make existence poorer than it is, this vainglorious unintelligence, which finds it easier to despise others than to understand them, all this middle-class morality, without greatness, without largeness, without happiness, without beauty, all these things are odious and hurtful: they make vice appear more human than virtue.

So thought Christopher: and in his desire to hurt those who

had wounded him, he did not see that he was being as unjust as those of whom he spoke.

No doubt these unfortunate people were almost as he saw them. But it was not their fault: it was the fault of their ungracious life which had made their faces, their doings, and their thoughts ungracious. They had suffered the deformation of misery—not that great misery which swoops down and slays or forges anew—but the misery of ever-recurring ill-fortune, that small misery which trickles down drop by drop from the first day to the last.... Sad, indeed! For beneath these rough exteriors what treasures in reserve are there, of uprightness, of kindness, of silent heroism!... The whole strength of a people, all the sap of the future.

Christopher was not wrong in thinking duty exceptional. But love is so no less. Everything is exceptional. Everything that is of worth has no worse enemy—not than the evil (the vices are of worth)—than the habitual. The mortal enemy of the soul is the daily wear and tear.

Ada was beginning to weary of it. She was not clever enough to find new food for her love in an abundant nature like that of Christopher. Her senses and her vanity had extracted from it all the pleasure they could find in it. There was left her only the pleasure of destroying it. She had that secret instinct common to so many women, even good women, to so many men, even clever men, who are not creative either of art, or of children, or of pure action—no matter what: of life—and yet have too much life in apathy and resignation to bear with their uselessness. They desire others to be as useless as themselves, and do their best to make them so. Sometimes they do so in spite of themselves: and when they become aware of their criminal desire they hotly thrust it back. But often they hug it to themselves: and they set themselves according to their strength—some modestly in their own intimate circle, others largely with vast audiences—to destroy everything that has life, everything that loves life, everything that deserves life. The critic who takes upon himself to diminish the stature of great men and great thoughts—and the girl who amuses herself with dragging down her lovers, are both mischievous beasts of the same kind. But the second is the pleasanter of the two.

Ada then would have liked to corrupt Christopher a little, to humiliate him. In truth, she was not strong enough. More intelligence was needed, even in corruption. She felt that: and it was not the least of her rankling feelings against Christopher that her love could do him no harm. She did not admit the desire that was in her to do him harm: perhaps she would have done him none if she had been able. But it annoyed her that she could not do it. It is to fail in love for a woman, not to leave her the illusion of her power for good or evil over her lover: to do that must inevitably be to impel her irresistibly to the test of it. Christopher paid no attention to it. When Ada asked him jokingly:

"Would you leave your music for me?"

(Although she had no wish for him to do so.)

He replied frankly:

"No, my dear: neither you nor anybody else can do anything against that. I shall always make music."

"And you say you love?" cried she, put out.

She hated his music—the more so because she did not understand it, and it was impossible for her to find a means of coming to grips with this invisible enemy and so of wounding Christopher in his passion. If she tried to talk of it contemptuously, or scornfully to judge Christopher's compositions, he would shout with laughter; and in spite of her exasperation Ada would relapse into silence: for she saw that she was being ridiculous.

But if there was nothing to be done in that direction, she had discovered another weak spot in Christopher, one more easy of access: his moral faith. In spite of his squabble with the Vogels, and in spite of the intoxication of his adolescence, Christopher had preserved an instinctive modesty, a need of purity, of which he was entirely unconscious. At first it struck Ada, attracted and charmed her, then made her impatient and irritable, and finally, being the woman she was, she detested it. She did not make a frontal attack. She would ask insidiously: "Do you love me?"

"Of course!"

"How much do you love me?"

"As much as it is possible to love."

"That is not much... after all! ... What would you do for me?"

"Whatever you like."

"Would you do something dishonest?"

"That would be a queer way of loving."

"That is not what I asked. Would you?"

"It is not necessary."

"But if I wished it?"

"You would be wrong."

"Perhaps.... Would you do it?"

He tried to kiss her. But she thrust him away.

"Would you do it? Yes or no?"

"No, my dear."

She turned her back on him and was furious.

"You do not love me. You do not know what love is."

"That is quite possible," he said good-humouredly. He knew that, like anybody else, he was capable in a moment of passion of committing some folly, perhaps something dishonest, and—who knows?—even more: but he would have been ashamed of himself if he had boasted of it in cold blood, and certainly it would be dangerous to confess it to Ada. Some instinct warned him that the beloved foe was lying in ambush, and taking stock of his smallest remark: he would not give her any weapon against him.

She would return to the charge again, and ask him:

"Do you love me because you love me, or because I love you?"

"Because I love you."

"Then if I did not love you, you would still love me?"

"Yes."

"And if I loved someone else you would still love me?"

"Ah! I don't know about that.... I don't think so.... In any case you would be the last person to whom I should say so."

"How would it be changed?"

"Many things would be changed. Myself, perhaps. You, certainly."

"And if I changed, what would it matter?"

"All the difference in the world. I love you as you are. If you become another creature I can't promise to love you."

"You do not love, you do not love! What is the use of all this quibbling? You love or you do not love. If you love me you ought to love me just as I am, whatever I do, always."

"That would be to love you like an animal."

"I want to be loved like that."

"Then you have made a mistake," said he jokingly. "I am not the sort of man you want. I would like to be, but I cannot. And I will not."

"You are very proud of your intelligence! You love your intelligence more than you do me."

"But I love you, you wretch, more than you love yourself. The more beautiful and the more good you are, the more I love you."

"You are a schoolmaster," she said with asperity.

"What would you have me do? I love what is beautiful. Anything ugly disgusts me."

"Even in me?"

"Especially in you."

She drummed angrily with her foot.

"I will not be judged."

"Then complain of what I judge you to be, and of what I love in you," said he tenderly to appease her.

She let him take her in his arms, and deigned to smile, and let him kiss her. But in a moment when he thought she had forgotten she asked uneasily:

"What do you think ugly in me?"

He would not tell her: he replied cowardly:

"I don't think anything ugly in you."

She thought for a moment, smiled, and said:

"Just a moment, Christli: you say that you do not like lying?"

"I despise it."

"You are right," she said. "I despise it too. I am of a good conscience. I never lie."

He stared at her: she was sincere. Her unconsciousness disarmed him.

"Then," she went on, putting her arms about his neck, "why would you be cross with me if I loved someone else and told you so?"

"Don't tease me."

"I'm not teasing: I am not saying that I do love someone else: I am saying that I do not.... But if I did love someone later on..."

"Well, don't let us think of it."

"But I want to think of it. . . . You would not be angry with me? You could not be angry with me?"

"I should not be angry with you. I should leave you. That is all."

"Leave me? Why? If I still loved you . . .?"

"While you loved someone else?"

"Of course. It happens sometimes."

"Well, it will not happen with us."

"Why?"

"Because as soon as you love someone else, I shall love you no longer, my dear, never, never again."

"But just now you said perhaps. . . . Ah! you see you do not love me!"

"Well then: all the better for you."

"Because . . .?"

"Because if I loved you when you loved someone else it might turn out badly for you, me, and him."

"Then! . . . Now you are mad. Then I am condemned to stay with you all my life?"

"Be calm. You are free. You shall leave me when you like. Only it will not be *au revoir:* it will be good-bye."

"But if I still love you?"

"When people love, they sacrifice themselves to each other."

"Well, then . . . sacrifice yourself!"

He could not help laughing at her egotism: and she laughed too.

"The sacrifice of one only," he said, "means the love of one only."

"Not at all. It means the love of both. I shall not love you much longer if you do not sacrifice yourself for me. And think, Christli, how much you will love me, when you have sacrificed yourself, and how happy you will be."

They laughed and were glad to have a change from the seriousness of their disagreement.

He laughed and looked at her. At heart, as she said, she had no desire to leave Christopher at present: if he irritated her and often bored her, she knew the worth of such devotion as his: and she loved no one else. She talked so for fun, partly because she knew he disliked it, partly because she took pleasure in playing with equivocal and unclean thoughts like a child which delights to mess about with dirty water. He knew

this. He did not mind. But he was tired of these unwholesome discussions, of the silent struggle against this uncertain and uneasy creature whom he loved, who perhaps loved him: he was tired from the effort that he had to make to deceive himself about her, sometimes tired almost to tears. He would think: "Why, why is she like this? Why are people like this? How second-rate life is!" ... At the same time he would smile as he saw pretty face above him, her blue eyes, her flower-like complexion, her laughing, chattering lips, a little foolish, half open to reveal the brilliance of her tongue and her white teeth. Their lips would almost touch: and he would look at her as from a distance, a great distance, as from another world: he would: he would see her going farther and farther from him, vanishing in a mist.... And then he would lose sight of her. He could hear her no more. He would fall into a sort of smiling oblivion in which he thought of his music, his dreams, a thousand things foreign to Ada.... Ah! beautiful music!... so sad, so mortally sad! and yet kind, loving.... Ah! how good it is!... It is that, it is that.... Nothing else is true....

She would shake his arm. A voice would cry:

"Eh, what's the matter with you? You are mad, quite mad. Why do you look at me like that? Why don't you answer?"

Once more he would see the eyes looking at him. Who was it?... Ah! yes.... He would sigh.

She would watch him. She would try to discover what he was thinking of. She did not understand: but she felt that it was useless: that she could not keep hold of him, that there was always a door by which he could escape. She would conceal her irritation.

"Why are you crying?" she asked him once as he returned from one of his strange journeys into another life.

He drew his hands across his eyes. He felt that they were wet.

"I do not know," he said.

"Why don't you answer? Three times you have said the same thing."

"What do you want?" he asked gently.

She went back to her absurd discussions. He waved his hand wearily.

"Yes," she said. "I've done. Only a word more!" And off she started again.

Christopher shook himself angrily.

"Will you keep your dirtiness to yourself!"

"I was only joking."

"Find cleaner subjects, then!"

"Tell me why, then. Tell me why you don't like it."

"Why? You can't argue as to why a dung-heap smells. It does smell, and that is all! I hold my nose and go away."

He went away, furious: and he strode along taking in great breaths of the cold air.

But she would begin again, once, twice, ten times. She would bring forward every possible subject that could shock him and offend his conscience.

He thought it was only a morbid jest of a neurasthenic girl, amusing herself by annoying him. He would shrug his shoulders or pretend not to hear her: he would not take her seriously. But sometimes he would long to throw her out of the window: for neurasthenia and the neurasthenics were very little to his taste....

But ten minutes away from her were enough to make him forget everything that had annoyed him. He would return to Ada with a fresh store of hopes and new illusions. He loved her. Love is a perpetual act of faith. Whether God exists or not is a small matter: we believe, because we believe. We love because we love: there is no need of reasons! ...

After Christopher's quarrel with the Vogels it became impossible for them to stay in the house, and Louisa had to seek another lodging for herself and her son.

One day Christopher's youngest brother Ernst, of whom they had not heard for a long time, suddenly turned up. He was out of work; having been dismissed in turn from all the situations he had procured: his purse was empty and his health ruined: and so he had thought it would be as well to re-establish himself in his mother's house.

Ernst was not on bad terms with either of his brothers: they thought very little of him and he knew it: but he did not bear any grudge against them, for he did not care. He had no ill-feeling against them. It was not worth the trouble. Everything they said to him slipped off his back without leaving a mark. He just smiled with his sly eyes, tried to look contrite, thought of something else, agreed, thanked them, and in the end always

managed to extort money from one or other of them. In spite of himself Christopher was fond of the pleasant mortal who, like himself, and more than himself, resembled their father Melchior in features. Tall and strong like Christopher, he had regular features, a frank expression, a straight nose, a laughing mouth, fine teeth, and endearing manners. Whenever Christopher saw him he was disarmed, and could not deliver half the reproaches that he had prepared: in his heart he had a sort of motherly indulgence for the handsome boy who was of his blood, and physically at all events did him credit. He did not believe him to be bad: and Ernst was not a fool. Without culture, he was not without brains: he was even not incapable of taking an interest in the things of the mind. He enjoyed listening to music: and, without understanding his brother's compositions, he would listen to them with interest. Christopher, who did not receive too much sympathy from his family, had been glad to see him at some of his concerts.

But Ernst's chief talent was the knowledge that he possessed of the character of his two brothers, and his skill in making use of his knowledge. It was no use Christopher knowing Ernst's egotism and indifference: it was no use his seeing that Ernst never thought of his mother or himself except when he had need of them: he was always taken in by his affectionate ways and very rarely did he refuse him anything. He much preferred him to his other brother Rodolphe, who was orderly and correct, assiduous in his business, strictly moral, never asked for money, and never gave any either, visited his mother regularly every Sunday, stayed an hour and only talked about himself, boasting about himself, his firm and everything that concerned him, never asking about the others, and taking no interest in them, and going away when the hour was up, quite satisfied with having done his duty. Christopher could not bear him. He always arranged to be out when Rodolphe came. Rodolphe was jealous of him: he despised artists and Christopher's success really hurt him, though he did not fail to turn his small fame to account in the commercial circles in which he moved: but he never said a word about it either to his mother or to Christopher; he pretended to ignore it. On the other hand, he never ignored the least of the unpleasant things that happened to Christopher. Christopher despised such pettiness, and pretended not to notice it: but it

would really have hurt him to know, though he never thought about it, that much of the unpleasant information that Rodolphe had about him came from Ernst. The young rascal fed the differences between Christopher and Rodolphe: no doubt he recognised Christopher's superiority and perhaps even sympathised a little ironically with his candour. But he took good care to turn it to account: and while he despised Rodolphe's ill-feeling he exploited it shamefully. He flattered his vanity and jealousy, accepted his rebukes deferentially and kept him primed with the scandalous gossip of the town, especially with everything concerning Christopher—of which he was always marvellously informed. So he attained his ends, and Rodolphe, in spite of his avarice, allowed Ernst to despoil him just as Christopher did.

So Ernst made use and a mock of them both, impartially. And so both of them loved him.

In spite of his tricks Ernst was in a pitiful condition when he turned up at his mother's house. He had come from Munich where he had found, and, as usual, almost immediately lost, a situation. He had had to travel the best part of the way on foot, through storms of rain, sleeping God knows where. He was covered with mud, ragged, looking like a beggar, and coughing miserably. Louisa was upset, and Christopher ran to him in alarm when they saw him come in. Ernst, whose tears flowed easily, did not fail to make use of the effect he had produced: and there was a general reconciliation: all three wept in each other's arms.

Christopher gave up his room: they warmed the bed, and laid the invalid in it, who seemed to be on the point of death. Louisa and Christopher sat by his bedside and took it in turns to watch by him. They called in a doctor, procured medicines, made a good fire in the room, and gave him special food.

Then they had to clothe him from head to foot: linen, shoes, clothes, everything new. Ernst left himself in their hands. Louisa and Christopher sweated to squeeze the money from their earnings. The were very straitened at the moment: the removal, the new lodgings, which were dearer though just as uncomfortable, fewer lessons for Christopher and more expenses. They could just make both ends meet. They managed somehow. No doubt Christopher could have applied to Ro-

dolphe, who was more in a position to help Ernst, but he would not: he made it a point of honour to help his brother alone. He thought himself obliged to do so as the eldest—and because he was Christopher. Hot with shame he had to accept, to declare his willingness to accept an offer which he had indignantly rejected a fortnight before—a proposal from the agent of an unknown wealthy amateur who wanted to buy a musical composition for publication under his own name. Louisa took work out, mending linen. They hid their sacrifice from each other: they lied about the money they brought home.

When Ernst was convalescent and sitting huddled up by the fire, he confessed one day between his fits of coughing that he had a few debts. They were paid. No one reproached him. That would not have been kind to an invalid and a prodigal son who had repented and returned home. For Ernst seemed to have been changed by adversity and sickness. With tears in his eyes he spoke of his past misdeeds: and Louisa kissed him and told him to think no more of them. He was fond: he had always been able to get round his mother by his demonstrations of affection: Christopher had once been a little jealous of him. Now he thought it natural that the youngest and the weakest son should be the most loved. In spite of the small difference in their ages he regarded him almost as a son rather than as a brother. Ernst showed great respect for him: sometimes he would allude to the burdens that Christopher was taking upon himself, and to his sacrifice of money: but Christopher would not let him go on, and Ernst would content himself with showing his gratitude in his eyes humbly and affectionately. He would agree with the advice that Christopher gave him: and he would seem disposed to change his way of living and to work seriously as soon as he was well again.

He recovered: but had a long convalescence. The doctor declared that his health, which he had abused, needed to be fostered. So he stayed on in his mother's house, sharing Christopher's bed, eating heartily the bread that his brother earned, and the little dainty dishes that Louisa prepared for him. He never spoke of going. Louisa and Christopher never mentioned it either. They were too happy to have found again the son and the brother they loved.

Little by little in the long evenings that he spent with Ernst Christopher began to talk intimately to him. He needed to con-

fide in somebody. Ernst was clever: he had a quick mind and understood—or seemed to understand—on a hint only. There was pleasure in talking to him. And yet Christopher dared not tell him about what lay nearest to his heart: his love. He was kept back by a sort of modesty. Ernst, who knew all about it, never let it appear that he knew.

One day when Ernst was quite well again he went in the sunny afternoon and lounged along the Rhine. As he passed a noisy inn a little way out of the town, where there were drinking and dancing on Sundays, he saw Christopher sitting with Ada and Myrrha, who were making a great noise. Christopher saw him too, and blushed. Ernst was discreet and passed on without acknowledging him.

Christopher was much embarrassed by the encounter: it made him more keenly conscious of the company in which he was: it hurt him that his brother should have seen him then: not only because it made him lose the right of judging Ernst's conduct, but because he had a very lofty, very naïve, and rather archaic notion of his duties as an elder brother which would have seemed absurd to many people: he thought that in failing in that duty, as he was doing, he was lowered in his own eyes.

In the evening when they were together in their room, he waited for Ernst to allude to what had happened. But Ernst prudently said nothing and waited also. Then while they were undressing Christopher decided to speak about his love. He was so ill at ease that he dared not look at Ernst: and in his shyness he assumed a gruff way of speaking. Ernst did not help him out: he was silent and did not look at him, though he watched him all the same: and he missed none of the humour of Christopher's awkwardness and clumsy words. Christopher hardly dared pronounce Ada's name: and the portrait that he drew of her would have done just as well for any woman who was loved. But he spoke of his love: little by little he was carried away by the flood of tenderness that filled his heart: he said how good it was to love, how wretched he had been before he had found that light in the darkness, and that life was nothing without a dear, deep-seated love. His brother listened gravely: he replied tactfully, and asked no questions: but a warm handshake showed that he was of Christopher's way of thinking. They exchanged ideas concerning love and

life. Christopher was happy at being so well understood. They exchanged a brotherly embrace before they went to sleep.

Christopher grew accustomed to confiding his love to Ernst, though always shyly and reservedly. Ernst's discretion reassured him. He let him know his uneasiness about Ada: but he never blamed her: he blamed himself: and with tears in his eyes he would declare that he could not live if he were to lose her.

He did not forget to tell Ada about Ernst: he praised his wit and his good looks.

Ernst never approached Christopher with a request to be introduced to Ada: but he would shut himself up in his room and sadly refuse to go out, saying that he did not know anybody. Christopher would think ill of himself on Sundays for going on his excursions with Ada, while his brother stayed at home. And yet he hated not to be alone with his beloved: he accused himself of selfishness, and proposed that Ernst should come with them.

The introduction took place at Ada's door, on the landing. Ernst and Ada bowed politely. Ada came out, followed by her inseparable Myrrha, who when she saw Ernst gave a little cry of surprise. Ernst smiled, went up to Myrrha, and kissed her: she seemed to take it as a matter of course.

"What! You know each other?" asked Christopher in astonishment.

"Why, yes!" said Myrrha, laughing.

"Since when?"

"Oh, a long time!"

"And you knew?" asked Christopher, turning to Ada. "Why did you not tell me?"

"Do you think I know all Myrrha's lovers?" said Ada, shrugging her shoulders.

Myrrha took up the word and pretended in fun to be angry. Christopher could not find out any more about it. He was depressed. It seemed to him that Ernst and Myrrha and Ada had been lacking in honesty, although indeed he could not have brought any lie up against them: but it was difficult to believe that Myrrha, who had no secrets from Ada, had made a mystery of this, and that Ernst and Ada were not already acquainted with each other. He watched them. But they only exchanged a few trivial words, and Ernst only paid attention

to Myrrha all the rest of the day. Ada only spoke to Christopher: and she was much more amiable to him than usual.

From that time on Ernst always joined them. Christopher could have done without him: but he dared not say so. He had no other motive for wanting to leave his brother out than his shame in having him for boon companion. He had no suspicion of him. Ernst gave him no cause for it: he seemed to be in love with Myrrha, and was always reserved and polite with Ada, and even affected to avoid her in a way that was a little out of place: it was as though he wished to show his brother's mistress a little of the respect he showed to himself. Ada was not surprised by it, and was none the less careful.

They went on long excursions together. The two brothers would walk on in front. Ada and Myrrha, laughing and whispering, would follow a few yards behind. They would stop in the middle of the road and talk. Christopher and Ernst would stop and wait for them. Christopher would lose patience and go on: but soon he would turn back annoyed and irritated, by hearing Ernst talking and laughing with the two young women. He would want to know what they were saying: but when they came up with him their conversation would stop.

"What are you three always plotting together?" he would ask.

They would reply with some joke. They had a secret understanding like thieves at a fair.

Christopher had a sharp quarrel with Ada. They had been cross with each other all day. Strange to say, Ada had not assumed her air of offended dignity, to which she usually resorted in such cases, so as to avenge herself, by making herself as intolerably tiresome as possible. Now she simply pretended to ignore Christopher's existence, and she was in excellent spirits with the other two. It was as though in her heart she was not put out at all by the quarrel.

Christopher, on the other hand, longed to make peace: he was more in love than ever. His tenderness was now mingled with a feeling of gratitude for all the good things love had brought him, and regret for the hours he had wasted in stupid argument and angry thoughts—and the unreasoning fear, the mysterious idea that their love was nearing its end. Sadly he

looked at Ada's pretty face, and she pretended not to see him while she was laughing with the others: and the sight of her woke in him so many dear memories, of great love, of sincere intimacy. Her face had sometimes—it had now—so much goodness in it, a smile so pure, that Christopher asked himself why things were not better between them, why they spoiled their happiness with their whimsies, why she would insist on forgetting their bright hours, and denying and combating all that was good and honest in her—what strange satisfaction she could find in spoiling, and smudging, if only in thought, the purity of their love. He was conscious of an immense need of believing in the object of his love, and he tried once more to bring back his illusions. He accused himself of injustice: he was remorseful for the thoughts that he attributed to her, and of his lack of charity.

He went to her and tried to talk to her: she answered him with a few curt words: she had no desire for a reconciliation with him. He insisted: he begged her to listen to him for a moment away from the others. She followed him ungraciously. When they were a few yards away so that neither Myrrha nor Ernst could see them, he took her hands and begged her pardon, and knelt at her feet in the dead leaves of the wood. He told her that he could not go on living so at loggerheads with her: that he found no pleasure in the walk, or the fine day: that he could enjoy nothing, and could not even breathe, knowing that she detested him: he needed her love. Yes: he was often unjust, violent, disagreeable: he begged her to forgive him: it was the fault of his love, he could not bear anything second-rate in her, anything that was altogether unworthy of her and their memories of their dear past. He reminded her of it all, of their first meeting, their first days together: he said that he loved her just as much, that he would always love her, that she should not go away from him! She was everything to him. . . .

Ada listened to him, smiling, uneasy, almost softened. She looked at him with kind eyes, eyes that said that they loved each other, and that she was no longer angry. They kissed, and holding each other close they went into the leafless woods. She thought Christopher good and gentle, and was grateful to him for his tender words: but she did not relinquish the naughty whims that were in her mind. But she hesitated, she

did not cling to them so tightly: and yet she did not abandon what she had planned to do. Why? Who can say? . . . Because she had vowed what she would do?—Who knows? Perhaps she thought it more entertaining to deceive her lover that day, to prove to him, to prove to herself her freedom. She had no thought of losing him: she did not wish for that. She thought herself more sure of him than ever.

They reached a clearing in the forest. There were two paths. Christopher took one. Ernst declared that the other led more quickly to the top of the hill where they were going. Ada agreed with him. Christopher, who knew the way, having often been there, maintained that they were wrong. They did not yield. Then they agreed to try it: and each wagered that he would arrive first. Ada went with Ernst. Myrrha accompanied Christopher: she pretended that she was sure that he was right: and she added, "As usual." Christopher had taken the game seriously: and as he never liked to lose, he walked quickly, too quickly for Myrrha's liking, for she was in much less of a hurry than he.

"Don't be in a hurry, my friend," she said, in her quiet, ironic voice, "we shall get there first."

He was a little sorry.

"True," he said, "I am going a little too fast: there is no need."

He slackened his pace.

"But I know them," he went on. "I am sure they will run so as to be there before us."

Myrrha burst out laughing.

"Oh! no," she said. "Oh! no: don't you worry about that."

She hung on his arm and pressed close to him. She was a little shorter than Christopher, and as they walked she raised her soft eyes to him. She was really pretty and alluring. He hardly recognised her: the change was extraordinary. Usually her face was rather pale and puffy: but the smallest excitement, a merry thought, or the desire to please, was enough to make her worn expression vanish, and her cheeks flush, and the little wrinkles in her eyelids round and below her eyes disappear, and her eyes flash, and her whole face take on a youth, a life, a spiritual quality that never was in Ada's. Christopher was surprised by this metamorphosis, and turned his eyes away from hers: he was a little uneasy at being alone

with her. She embarrassed him and prevented him from dreaming as he pleased: he did not listen to what she said, he did not answer her, or if he did it was only at random: he was thinking—he wished to think only of Ada. He thought of the kindness in her eyes, her smile, her kiss: and his heart was filled with love. Myrrha wanted to make him admire the beauty of the trees with their little branches against the clear sky.... Yes: it was all beautiful: the clouds were gone, Ada had returned to him, he had succeeded in breaking the ice that lay between them: they loved once more: near or far, they were one. He sighed with relief: how light the air was! Ada had come back to him.... Everything brought her to mind.... It was a little damp: would she not be cold?... The lovely trees were powdered with hoar-frost: what a pity she should not see them!... But he remembered the wager, and hurried on: he was concerned only with not losing the wager. He shouted joyfully as they reached the goal:

"We are first!"

He waved his hat gleefully. Myrrha watched him and smiled.

The place where they stood was a high, steep rock in the middle of the woods. From the flat summit with its fringe of nut trees and little stunted oaks they could see, over the wooded slopes, the tops of the pines bathed in a purple mist, and the long ribbon of the Rhine in the blue valley. Not a bird called. Not a voice. Not a breath of air. A still, calm winter's day, its chilliness faintly warmed by the pale beams of a misty sun. Now and then in the distance there came the sharp whistle of a train in the valley. Christopher stood at the edge of the rock and looked down at the countryside. Myrrha watched Christopher.

He turned to her amiably:

"Well! The lazy things. It told them so!... Well! we must wait for them...."

He lay stretched out in the sun on the cracked earth.

"Yes. Let us wait..." said Myrrha, taking off her hat.

In her voice there was something so quizzical that he raised his head and looked at her.

"What is it?" she asked quietly.

"What did you say?"

"I said: Let us wait. It was no use making me run so fast."

"True."

They waited lying on the rough ground. Myrrha hummed a tune. Christopher took it up for a few bars. But he stopped every now and then to listen.

"I think I can hear them."

Myrrha went on singing.

"Do stop for a moment."

Myrrha stopped.

"No. It is nothing."

She went on with her song.

Christopher could not stay still.

"Perhaps they have lost their way."

"Lost? They could not. Ernst knows all the paths."

A fantastic idea passed through Christopher's mind.

"Perhaps they arrived first, and went away before we came!"

Myrrha was lying on her back and looking at the sun. She was seized with a wild burst of laughter in the middle of her song and all but choked. Christopher insisted. He wanted to go down to the station, saying that their friends would be there already. Myrrha at last made up her mind to move.

"You would be certain to lose them! . . . There was never any talk about the station. We were to meet here."

He sat down by her side. She was amused by his eagerness. He was conscious of the irony in her gaze as she looked at him. He began to be seriously troubled—to be anxious about them: he did not suspect them. He got up once more. He spoke of going down into the woods again and looking for them, calling to them. Myrrha gave a little chuchle: she took from her pocket a needle, scissors, and thread: and she calmly undid and sewed in again the feathers in her hat: she seemed to have established herself for the day.

"No, no, silly," she said. "If they wanted to come do you think they would not come of their own accord?"

There was a catch at his heart. He turned towards her: she did not look at him: she was busy with her work. He went up to her.

"Myrrha!" she said.

"Eh?" she replied without stopping. He knelt now to look more nearly at her.

"Myrrha!" he repeated.

"Well?" she asked, raising her eyes from her work and looking at him with a smile. "What is it?"

She had a mocking expression as she saw his downcast face.

"Myrrha!" he asked, choking, "tell me what you think. . . ."

She shrugged her shoulders, smiled, and went on working.

He caught her hands and took away the hat at which she was sewing.

"Leave off, leave off, and tell me. . . ."

She looked squarely at him and waited. She saw that Christopher's lips were trembling.

"You think," he said in a low voice, "that Ernst and Ada . . .?"

She smiled.

"Oh! well!"

He started back angrily.

"No! No! It is impossible! You don't think that! . . . No! No!"

She put her hands on his shoulders and rocked with laughter.

"How dense you are, how dense, my dear!"

He shook her violently.

"Don't laugh! Why do you laugh? You would not laugh if it were true. You love Ernst. . . ."

She went on laughing and drew him to her and kissed him. In spite of himself he returned her kiss. But when he felt her lips on his, her lips, still warm with his brother's kisses, he flung her away from him and held her face away from his own: he asked:

"You knew it? It was arranged between you?"

She said, "Yes," and laughed.

Christopher did not cry out, he made no movement of anger. He opened his mouth as though he could not breathe: he closed his eyes and clutched at his breast with his hands: his heart was bursting. Then he lay down on the ground with his face buried in his hands, and he was shaken by a crisis of disgust and despair like a child.

Myrrha, who was not very soft-hearted, was sorry for him: involuntarily she was filled with motherly compassion, and leaned over him, and spoke affectionately to him, and tried to make him sniff at her smelling-bottle. But he thrust her away in horror, and got up so sharply that she was afraid. He had

neither strength nor desire for revenge. He looked at her with his face twisted with grief.

"You drab," he said in despair. "You do not know the harm you have done. . . ."

She tried to hold him back. He fled through the woods, spitting out his disgust with such ignominy, with such muddy hearts, with such incestuous sharing as that to which they had tried to bring him. He wept, he trembled: he sobbed with disgust. He was filled with horror of them all, of himself, of his body and soul. A storm of contempt broke loose in him: it had long been brewing: sooner or later there had to come the reaction against the base thoughts, the degrading compromises, the stale and pestilential atmosphere in which he had been living for months: but the need of loving, of deceiving himself about the woman he loved, had postponed the crisis as long as possible. Suddenly it burst upon him: and it was better so. There was a great gust of wind of a biting purity, an icy breeze which swept away the miasma. Disgust in one swoop had killed his love for Ada.

If Ada thought more firmly to establish her dominion over Christopher by such an act, that proved once more her gross inappreciation of her lover. Jealousy which binds souls that are besmirched could only revolt a nature like Christopher's, young, proud, and pure. But what he could not forgive, what he never would forgive, was that the betrayal was not the outcome of passion in Ada, hardly even of one of those absurd and degrading though often irresistible caprices to which the reason of a woman is sometimes hard put to it not to surrender. No—he understood now—it was in her a secret desire to degrade him, to humiliate him, to punish him for his moral resistance, for his inimical faith, to lower him to the common level, to bring him to her feet, to prove to herself her own power for evil. And he asked himself with horror: what is this impulse towards dirtiness, which is in the majority of human beings—this desire to besmirch the purity of themselves and others—these swinish souls, who take a delight in rolling in filth, and are happy when not one inch of their skins is left clean! . . .

Ada waited two days for Christopher to return to her. Then she began to be anxious, and sent him a tender note in which she made no allusion to what had happened. Christopher did

not even reply. He hated Ada so profoundly that no words could express his hatred. He had cut her out of his life. She no longer existed for him.

Christopher was free of Ada, but he was not free of himself. In vain did he try to return to illusion, and to take up again the calm and chaste strength of the past. We cannot return to the past. We have to go onward: it is useless to turn back, save only to see the places by which we have passed, the distant smoke from the roofs under which we have slept, dying away on the horizon in the mists of memory. But nothing so distances us from the souls that we had than a few months of passion. The road takes a sudden turn: the country is changed: it is as though we were saying good-bye for the last time to all that we are leaving behind.

Christopher could not yield to it. He held out his arms to the past: he strove desperately to bring to life again the soul that had been his, lonely and resigned. But it was gone. Passion itself is not so dangerous as the ruins that it heaps up and leaves behind. In vain did Christopher not love, in vain—for a moment—did he despise love: he bore the marks of its talons: his whole being was steeped in it: there was in his heart a void which must be filled. With that terrible need of tenderness and pleasure which devours men and woman when they have once tasted it, some other passion was needed, were it only the contrary passion, the passion of contempt, of proud purity, of faith in virtue. They were not enough, they were not enough to stay his hunger: they were only the food of a moment. His life consisted of a succession of violent reactions—leaps from one extreme to the other. Sometimes he would bend his passion to rules inhumanly ascetic: not eating, drinking water, wearing himself out with walking, heavy tasks, and so not sleeping, denying himself every sort of pleasure. Sometimes he would persuade himself that strength is the true morality for people like himself: and he would plunge into the quest of joy. In either case he was unhappy. He could no longer be alone. He could no longer not be alone.

The only thing that could have saved him would have been to find a true friendship—Rosa's perhaps: he could have taken refuge in that. But the rupture was complete between the two families. They no longer met. Only once had Christopher seen

Rosa. She was just coming out from Mass. He had stopped to bow to her: and when she saw him she had made a movement towards him: but when he had tried to go to her through the stream of the devout walking down the steps, she had turned her eyes away: and when he approached her she bowed coldly and passed on. In the girl's heart he felt intense, icy contempt. And he did not feel that she still loved him and would have liked to tell him so: but she had come to think of her love as a fault and foolishness: she thought Christopher bad and corrupt, and further from her than ever. So they were lost to each other for ever. And perhaps it was as well for both of them. In spite of her goodness, she was not near enough to life to be able to understand him. In spite of his need of affection and respect he would have stifled in a commonplace and confined existence, without joy, without sorrow, without air. They would both have suffered. The unfortunate occurrence which cut them apart was, when all was told, perhaps, fortunate, as often happens—as always happens—to those who are strong and endure.

But at the moment it was a great sorrow and a great misfortune for them. Especially for Christopher. Such virtuous intolerance, such narrowness of soul, which sometimes seems to deprive those who have them most of all intelligence, and those who are most good of kindness, irritated him, hurt him, and flung him back in protest into a freer life.

During his loafing with Ada in the beer-gardens of the neighbourhood he had made acquaintance with several good fellows—Bohemians, whose carelessness and freedom of manners had not been altogether distasteful to him. One of them, Friedemann, a musician like himself, an organist, a man of thirty, was not without intelligence, and was good at his work, but he was incurably lazy and rather than make the slightest effort to be more than mediocre, he would have died of hunger, though not, perhaps, of thirst. He comforted himself in his indolence by speaking ill of those who lived energetically, God knows why: and his sallies, rather heavy for the most part, generally made people laugh. Having more liberty than his companions, he was not afraid to sneer—though timidly, and with winks and nods and suggestive remarks—at those who held positions: he was even capable of not having ready-made opinions about music, and of having a sly fling at the forged

reputations of the great men of the day. He had no mercy upon women either: when he was making his jokes he loved to repeat the old saying of some misogynist monk about them, and Christopher enjoyed its bitterness just then more than anybody:

"*Femina mors animae.*"

In his state of upheaval Christopher found some distraction in talking to Friedemann. He judged him, he could not long take pleasure in his vulgar bantering wit: his mockery and perpetual denial became irritating before long and he felt the impotence of it all: but it did soothe his exasperation with the self-sufficient stupidity of the Philistines. While he heartily despised his companion, Christopher could not do without him. They were continually seen together sitting with the unclassed and doubtful people of Friedemann's acquaintance who were even more worthless than himself. They used to play, and harangue, and drink the whole evening. Christopher would suddenly wake up in the midst of the dreadful smell of food and tobacco: he would look at the people about him with strange eyes: he would not recognise them: he would think in agony:

"Where am I? Who are these people? What have I to do with them?"

Their remarks and their laughter would make him sick. But he could not bring himself to leave them: he was afraid of going home and of being left alone face to face with his soul, his desires, and remorse. He was going to the dogs: he knew it: he was doing it deliberately—with cruel clarity he saw in Friedemann the degraded image of what he was—of what he would be one day: and he was passing through a phase of such disheartenedness and disgust that instead of being brought to himself by such a menace, it actually brought him low.

He would have gone to the dogs, if he could. Fortunately, like all creatures of his kind, he had a spring, a succour against destruction which others do not possess: his strength, his instinct for life, his instinct against letting himself perish, an instinct more intelligent than his intelligence, and stronger than his will. And also, unknown to himself, he had the strange curiosity of the artist, that passionate, impersonal quality, which is in every creature really endowed with creative power. In vain did

he love, suffer, give himself utterly to all his passions: he saw them. They were in him but they were not himself. A myriad of little souls moved obscurely in him towards a fixed point unknown, yet certain, just like the planetary worlds which are drawn through space into a mysterious abyss. That perpetual state of unconscious action and reaction was shown especially in those giddy moments when sleep came over his daily life, and from the depths of sleep and the night rose the multiform face of Being with its sphinx-like gaze. For a year Christopher had been obsessed with dreams in which in a second of time he felt clearly with perfect illusion that he *was* at one and the same time several different creatures, often far removed from each other by countries, worlds, centuries. In his waking state Christopher was still under his hallucination and uneasiness, though he could not remember what had caused it. It was like the weariness left by some fixed idea that is gone, though traces of it are left and there is no understanding it. But while his soul was so troublously struggling through the network of the days, another soul, eager and serene, was watching all his desperate efforts. He did not see it: but it cast over him the reflection of its hidden light. That soul was joyously greedy to feel everything, to suffer everything, to observe and understand men, women, the earth, life, desires, passions, thoughts, even those that were torturing, even those that were mediocre, even those that were vile: and it was enough to lend them a little of its light, to save Christopher from destruction. It made him feel—he did not know how—that he was not altogether alone. That love of being and of knowing everything, that second soul, raised a rampart against his destroying passions.

But if it was enough to keep his head above water, it did not allow him to climb out of it unaided. He could not succeed in seeing clearly into himself, and mastering himself, and regaining possession of himself. Work was impossible for him. He was passing through an intellectual crisis: the most fruitful of his life: all his future life was germinating in it: but that inner wealth for the time being only showed itself in extravagance: and the immediate effect of such superabundance was not different from that of the flattest sterility. Christopher was submerged by his life. All his powers had shot up and grown too fast, all at once, suddenly. Only his will had not

grown with them: and it was dismayed by such a throng of monsters. His personality was cracking in every part. Of this earthquake, this inner cataclysm, others saw nothing. Christopher himself could see only his impotence to will, to create, to be. Desires, instincts, thoughts issued one after another like clouds of sulphur from the fissures of a volcano: and he was for ever asking himself: "And now, what will come out? What will become of me? Will it always be so? or is this the end of all? Shall I be nothing, always?"

And now there sprang up in him his hereditary instincts, the vices of those who had gone before him. He got drunk.

He would return home smelling of wine, laughing, in a state of collapse.

Poor Louisa would look at him, sigh, say nothing, and pray.

But one evening when he was coming out of an inn by the gates of the town he saw, a few yards in front of him on the road, the droll shadow of his uncle Gottfried, with his pack on his back. The little man had not been home for months, and his periods of absence were growing longer and longer. Christopher hailed him gleefully. Gottfried, bending under his load, turned round: he looked at Christopher, who was making extravagant gestures, and sat down on a milestone to wait for him. Christopher came up to him with a beaming face, skipping along, and shook his uncle's hand with great demonstrations of affection. Gottfried took a long look at him, and then he said:

"Good day, Melchior."

Christopher thought his uncle had made a mistake, and burst out laughing.

"The poor man is breaking up," he thought; "he is losing his memory."

Indeed, Gottfried did look old, shrivelled, shrunken, and dried: his breathing came short and painfully. Christopher went on talking. Gottfried took his pack on his shoulders again and went on in silence. They went home together, Christopher gesticulating and talking at the top of his voice, Gottfried coughing and saying nothing. And when Christopher questioned him, Gottfried still called him Melchior. And then Christopher asked him:

"What do you mean by calling me Melchior? My name is Christopher, you know. Have you forgotten my name?"

Gottfried did not stop. He raised his eyes toward Christopher, and looked at him, shook his head, and said coldly:

"No. You are Melchior: I know you."

Christopher stopped, dumbfounded. Gottfried trotted along: Christopher followed him without a word. He was sobered. As they passed the door of a café he went up to the dark panes of glass, in which the gas-jets of the entrance and the empty streets were reflected, and he looked at himself: he recognised Melchior. He went home crushed.

He spent the night—a night of anguish—in examining himself, in soul-searching. He understood now. Yes: he recognised the instincts and vices that had come to light in him: they horrified him. He thought of that dark watching by the body of Melchior, of all that he had sworn to do, and, surveying his life since then, he knew that he had failed to keep his vows. What had he done in the year? What had he done for his God, for his art, for his soul? What had he done for eternity? There was not a day that had not been wasted, botched, besmirched. Not a single piece of work, not a thought, not an effort of enduring quality. A chaos of desires destructive of each other. Wind, dust, nothing.... What did his intentions avail him? He had fulfilled none of them. He had done exactly the opposite of what he had intended. He had become what he had no wish to be: that was the balance-sheet of his life.

He did not go to bed. About six in the morning, it was still dark, he heard Gottfried getting ready to depart. For Gottfried had had no intention of staying on. As he was passing the town he had come as usual to embrace his sister and nephew: but he had announced that he would go on next morning.

Christopher went downstairs. Gottfried saw his pale face and his eyes sunken with the night of torment. He smiled fondly at him and asked him to go a little of the way with him. They set out together before dawn. They had no need to talk: they understood each other. As they passed the cemetery Gottfried said:

"Shall we go in?"

When he came to the place he never failed to pay a visit to Jean Michel and Melchior. Christopher had not been there for a year. Gottfried knelt by Melchior's grave and said:

"Let us pray that they may sleep well and not come to torment us."

His thought was a mixture of strange superstition and sound sense: sometimes it surprised Christopher: but now it was only too clear to him. They said no more until they left the cemetery.

When they had closed the creaking gate, and were walking along the wall through the cold fields, waking from slumber, by the little path which led them under the cypress trees from which the snow was dropping, Christopher began to weep.

"Oh! uncle," he said, "how wretched I am!"

He dared not speak of his experience in love, from an odd fear of embarrassing or hurting Gottfried: but he spoke of his shame, his mediocrity, his cowardice, his broken vows.

"What am I to do, uncle? I have tried, I have struggled: and after a year I am no further on than before. Worse: I have gone back. I am good for nothing. I am good for nothing! I have ruined my life. I am perjured! . . ."

They were walking up the hill above the town. Gottfried said kindly:

"Not for the last time, my boy. We do not do what we will to do. We will and we live: two things. You must be comforted. The great thing is, you see, never to give up willing and living. The rest does not depend on us."

Christopher repeated desperately:

"I have perjured myself."

"Do you hear?" said Gottfried.

(The cocks were crowing in all the countryside.)

"They, too, are crowing for another who is perjured. They crow for every one of us, every morning."

"A day will come," said Christopher bitterly, "when they will no longer crow for me. . . . A day to which there is no tomorrow. And what shall I have made of my life?"

"There is always a tomorrow," said Gottfried.

"But what can one do, if willing is no use?"

"Watch and pray."

"I do not believe."

Gottfried smiled.

"You would not be alive if you did not believe. Everyone believes. Pray."

"Pray to what?"

Gottfried pointed to the sun appearing on the horizon, red and frozen.

"Be reverent before the dawning day. Do not think of what will be in a year, or in ten years. Think of today. Leave your theories. All theories, you see, even those of virtue, are bad, foolish, mischievous. Do not abuse life. Live in today. Be reverent towards each day. Love it, respect it, do not sully it, do not hinder it from coming to flower. Love it even when it is grey and sad like today. Do not be anxious. See. It is winter now. Everything is asleep. The good earth will awake again. You have only to be good and patient like the earth. Be reverent. Wait. If you are good, all will go well. If you are not, if you are weak, if you do not succeed, well, you must be happy in that. No doubt it is the best you can do. So, then, why *will?* Why be angry because of what you cannot do? We all have to do what we can. . . . *Als ich kann.*"

"It is not enough," said Christopher, making a face.

Gottfried laughed pleasantly.

"It is more than anybody does. You are a vain fellow. You want to be a hero. That is why you do such silly things. . . . A hero! . . . I don't quite know what that is: but, you see, I imagine that a hero is a man who does what he can. The others do not do it."

"Oh!" sighed Christopher. "Then what is the good of living? It is not worth while. And yet there are people who say: 'He who wills can!'" . . .

Gottfried laughed again softly.

"Yes? . . . Oh! well, they are liars, my friend. Or they do not will anything much. . . ."

They had reached the top of the hill. They embraced affectionately. The little pedlar went on, treading wearily. Christopher stayed there, lost in thought, and watched him go. He repeated his uncle's saying:

"*Als ich kann* (The best I can)."

And he smiled, thinking:

"Yes. . . . All the same. . . . It is enough."

He returned to the town. The frozen snow crackled under his feet. The bitter winter wind made the bare branches of the stunted trees on the hill shiver. It reddened his cheeks, and made his skin tingle, and set his blood racing. The red roofs of the town below were smiling under the brilliant, cold sun.

The air was strong and keen. The frozen earth seemed to rejoice in bitter gladness. And Christopher's heart was like that. He thought:

"I, too, shall wake again."

There were still tears in his eyes. He dried them with the back of his hand, and laughed to see the sun dipping down behind a veil of mist. The clouds, heavy with snow, were floating over the town, lashed by the squall. He laughed at them. The wind blew icily. . . .

"Blow, blow! . . . Do what you will with me. Bear me with you! . . . I know now where I am going."

Part IV

REVOLT

I

SHIFTING SANDS

Free! He felt that he was free! . . . Free of others and of himself! The network of passion in which he had been enmeshed for more than a year had suddenly been burst asunder. How? He did not know. The filaments had given before the growth of his being. It was one of those crises of growth in which robust natures tear away the dead casing of the year that is past, the old soul in which they are cramped and stifled.

Christopher breathed deeply, without understanding what had happened. An icy whirlwind was rushing through the great gate of the town as he returned from taking Gottfried on his way. The people were walking with heads lowered against the storm. Girls going to their work were struggling against the wind that blew against their skirts: they stopped every now and then to breathe, with their nose and cheeks red, and they looked exasperated, and as though they wanted to cry. He thought of that other torment through which he had passed. He looked at the wintry sky, the town covered with snow, the people struggling along past him: he looked about him, into himself: he was no longer bound. He was alone! . . . Alone! How happy to be alone, to be his own! What joy to have escaped from his bonds, from his torturing memories, from the hallucinations of faces that he loved or detested! What joy at last to live, without being the prey of life, to have become his own master! . . .

He went home white with snow. He shook himself gaily like a dog. As he passed his mother, who was sweeping the passage, he lifted her up, giving little inarticulate cries of affection such as one makes to a tiny child. Poor old Louisa struggled in her son's arms: she was wet with the melting snow: and she called him, with a jolly laugh, a great fool.

He went up to his room three steps at a time. He could hardly see himself in his little mirror, it was so dark. But his heart was glad. His room was low and narrow, and it was difficult to move in it, but it was like a kingdom to him. He

locked the door, and laughed with pleasure. At last he was finding himself! How long he had been gone astray! He was eager to plunge into thought like a bather into water. It was like a great lake afar off melting into the mists of blue and gold. After a night of fever and oppressive heat he stood by the edge of it, with his legs bathed in the freshness of the water, his body kissed by the wind of a summer morning. He plunged in and swam: he knew not where he was going, and did not care: it was joy to swim wherever he pleased. He was silent, then he laughed, and listened for the thousand thousand sounds of his soul: it swarmed with life. He could distinguish nothing: his head was swimming: he felt only a bewildering happiness. He was glad to feel in himself such unknown forces: and, indolently postponing putting his powers to the test, he sank back into the intoxication of pride in the inward flowering, which, held back for months, now burst forth like a sudden spring.

His mother called him to breakfast. He went down: he was giddy and light-headed as though he had spent a day in the open air: but there was such a radiance of joy in him that Louisa asked what was the matter. He made no reply: he seized her by the waist and forced her to dance with him round the table on which the tureen was steaming. Out of breath Louisa cried that he was mad: then she clasped her hands.

"Dear God!" she said anxiously. "Sure, he is in love again!"

Christopher roared with laughter. He hurled his napkin into the air.

"In love?..." he cried. "Oh! Lord!... but no! I've had enough! You can be easy on that score. That is done, done, for ever!... Ouf!"

He drank a glassful of water.

Louisa looked at him, reassured, wagged her head, and smiled.

"That's a drunkard's pledge," she said. "It won't last until tonight."

"Then the day is clear gain," he replied good-humouredly.

"Oh, yes!" she said. "But what has made you so happy?"

"I am happy. That is all."

Sitting opposite her with his elbows on the table he tried to tell her all that he was going to do. She listened with kindly scepticism, and gently pointed out that his soup was going

cold. He knew that she did not hear what he was saying: but he did not care: he was talking for his own satisfaction.

They looked at each other smiling: he talking: she hardly listening. Although she was proud of her son she attached no great importance to his artistic projects: she was thinking: "He is happy: that matters most." While he was growing more and more excited with his discourse he watched his mother's dear face, with her black shawl tightly tied round her head, her white hair, her young eyes that devoured him lovingly, her sweet and tranquil kindliness. He knew exactly what she was thinking. He said to her jokingly:

"It is all one to you, eh? You don't care about what I'm telling you?"

She protested weakly.

"Oh, no! Oh, no!"

He kissed her.

"Oh, yes! Oh yes! You need not defend yourself. You are right. Only love me. There is no need to understand me—either for you or for anybody else. I do not need anybody or anything now: I have everything in myself. . . ."

"Oh!" said Louisa. "Another maggot in his brain! . . . But if he must have one I prefer this to the other."

What sweet happiness to float on the surface of the lake of his thoughts! . . . Lying in the bottom of a boat with his body bathed in sun, his face kissed by the light fresh wind that skims over the face of the waters, he goes to sleep: he is swung by threads from the sky. Under his body lying at full length, under the rocking boat he feels the deep, swelling water: his hand dips into it. He rises: and with his chin on the edge of the boat he watches the water flowing by as he did when he was a child. He sees the reflection of strange creatures darting by like lightning. . . . More, and yet more. . . . They are never the same. He laughs at the fantastic spectacle that is unfolded within him: he laughs at his own thoughts: he has no need to catch and hold them. Select? Why select among so many thousands of dreams? There is plenty of time! . . . Later on! . . . He has only to throw out a line at will to draw in the monsters that he sees gleaming in the water. He lets them pass. . . . Later on! . . .

The boat floats on at the whim of the warm wind and the insentient stream. All is soft, sun, and silence.

At last languidly he throws out his line. Leaning out over the lapping water he follows it with his eyes until it disappears. After a few moments of torpor he draws it in slowly: as he draws it in it becomes heavier: just as he is about to fish it out of the water he stops to take breath. He knows that he has his prey: he does not know what it is: he prolongs the pleasure of expectancy.

At last he makes up his mind: fish with gleaming, many-coloured scales appear from the water: they writhe like a nest of snakes. He looks at them curiously, he stirs them with his finger: but hardly has he drawn them from the water than their colours fade and they slip between his fingers. He throws them back into the water and begins to fish for others. He is more eager to see one after another all the dreams stirring in him than to catch at any one of them: they all seem more beautiful to him when they are freely swimming in the transparent lake....

He caught all kinds of them, each more extravagant than the last. Ideas had been heaped up in him for months and he had not drawn upon them, so that he was bursting with riches. But it was all higgledy-piggledy: his mind was a Babel, an old Jew's curiosity shop in which there were piled up in the one room rare treasures, precious stuffs, scrap-iron, and rags. He could not distinguish their values: everything amused him. There were thrilling chords, colours which rang like bells, harmonies which buzzed like bees, melodies smiling like lovers' lips. There were visions of the country, faces, passions, souls, characters, literary ideas, metaphysical ideas. There were great projects, vast and impossible, tetralogies, decalogies, pretending to depict everything in music, covering whole worlds. And, most often, there were obscure, flashing sensations, called forth by a trifle, the sound of a voice, a man or a woman passing in the street, the pattering of rain. An inward rhythm. Many of these projects advanced no further than their title: most of them were never more than a note or two: it was enough. Like all very young people, he thought he had created what he dreamed of creating.

But he was too keenly alive to be satisfied for long with such fantasies. He wearied of an illusory possession: he wished to seize his dreams. How to begin? They seemed to him all

equally important. He turned and turned them: he rejected them, he took them up again.... No, he never took them up again: they were no longer the same, they were never to be caught twice: they were always changing: they changed in his hands, under his eyes, while he was watching them. He must make haste: he could not: he was appalled by the slowness with which he worked. He would have liked to do everything in one day, and he found it horribly difficult to complete the smallest thing. His dreams were passing and he was passing himself: while he was doing one thing it worried him not to be doing another. It was as though it was enough to have chosen one of his fine subjects for it to lose all interest for him. And so all his riches availed him nothing. His thoughts had life only on condition that he did not tamper with them: everything that he succeeded in doing was still-born. It was the torment of Tantalus: within reach were fruits that became stones as soon as he plucked them: near his lips was a clear stream which sank away whenever he stooped to drink.

To slake his thirst he tried to sip at the spring that he had conquered, his old compositions.... Loathsome in taste! At the first gulp he spat it out again, cursing. What! That tepid water, that insipid music, was that his music? He read through all his compositions: he was horrified: he understood not a note of them, he could not even understand how he had come to write them. He blushed. Once after reading through a page more foolish than the rest he turned round to make sure that there was nobody in the room, and then he went and hid his face in his pillow like a child ashamed. Sometimes they seemed to him so preposterously silly that they were quite funny, and he forgot that they were his own....

"What an idiot!" he would cry, rocking with laughter.

But nothing touched him more than those compositions in which he had set out to express his own passionate feelings: the sorrows and joys of love. Then he would bound in his chair as though a fly had stung him: he would thump on the table, beat his head, and roar angrily: he would coarsely apostrophise himself: he would vow himself to be a swine, trebly a scoundrel, a clod, and a clown—a whole litany of denunciation. In the end he would go and stand before his mirror, red with shouting, and then he would take hold of his chin and say:

"Look, look, you great fool, look at the ass-face that is yours! I'll teach you to lie, you blackguard! Water, sir, water."

He would plunge his face into his basin, and hold it under water until he was like to choke. When he drew himself up, scarlet, with his eyes starting from his head, snorting like a seal, he would rush to his table, without bothering to sponge away the water trickling down him: he would seize the unhappy compositions, angrily tear them in pieces, growling.

"There, you beast! . . . There, there, there! . . ."

Then he would recover.

What exasperated him most in his compositions was their untruth. Not a spark of feeling in them. A phraseology got by heart, a schoolboy's rhetoric: he spoke of love like a blind man of colour: he spoke of it from hearsay, only repeating the current platitudes. And it was not only love: it was the same with all the passions, which had been used for themes and declamations. And yet he had always tried to be sincere. But it is not enough to wish to be sincere: it is necessary to have the power to be so: and how can a man be so when as yet he knows nothing of life? What had revealed the falseness of his work, what had suddenly dug a pit between himself and his past was the experience of life which he had had during the last six months. He had left fantasy: there was now in him a real standard to which he could bring all his thoughts for judgement as to their truth or untruth.

The disgust which his old work, written without passion, roused in him, made him decide with his usual exaggeration that he would write no more until he was forced to write by some passionate need: and leaving the pursuit of his ideas at that, he swore that he would renounce music for ever, unless creation were imposed upon him in a thunderclap.

He made this resolve because he knew quite well that the storm was coming.

Thunder falls when it will, and where it will. But there are peaks which attract it. Certain places—certain souls—breed storms: they create them, or draw them from all points of the horizon: and certain ages of life, like certain months of the year, are so saturated with electricity, that thunderstorms are produced in them—if not at will—at any rate when they are expected.

The whole being of a man is taut for it. Often the storm lies brooding for days and days. The pale sky is hung with burning, fleecy clouds. No wind stirs. The still air ferments, and seems to boil. The earth lies in a stupor: no sound comes from it. The brain hums feverishly: all nature awaits the explosion of the gathering forces, the thud of the hammer which is slowly rising to fall back suddenly on the anvil of the clouds. Dark, warm shadows pass: a fiery wind rushes through the body, the nerves quiver like leaves.... Then silence falls again. The sky goes on gathering thunder.

In such expectancy there is voluptuous anguish. In spite of the discomfort that weighs so heavily upon you, you feel in your veins the fire which is consuming the universe. The soul surfeited boils in the furnace, like wine in a vat. Thousands of germs of life and death are in labour in it. What will issue from it? The soul knows not. Like a woman with child, it is silent: it gazes in upon itself: it listens anxiously for the stirring in its womb, and thinks: "What will be born of me?" ...

Sometimes such waiting is in vain. The storm passes without breaking: but you wake heavy, cheated, enervated, disheartened. But it is only postponed: the storm will break: if not today, then tomorrow: the longer it is delayed, the more violent will it be....

Now it comes! ... The clouds have come up from all corners of the soul. Thick masses, blue and black, rent by the frantic darting of the lightning: they advance heavily, drunkenly, darkening the soul's horizon, blotting out light. An hour of madnesss! ... The exasperated Elements, let loose from the cage in which they are held bound by the Laws which hold the balance between the mind and the existence of things, reign, formless and colossal, in the night of consciousness. The soul is in agony. There is no longer the will to live. There is only longing for the end, for the deliverance of death....

And suddenly there is lightning!

Christopher shouted for joy.

Joy, furious joy, the sun that lights up all that is and will be, the godlike joy of creation! There is no joy but in creation. There are no living beings but those who create. All the rest are shadows, hovering over the earth, strangers to life. All the joys of life are the joys of creation: love, genius, action—

quickened by flames issuing from one and the same fire. Even those who cannot find a place by the great fireside: the ambitious, the egotists, the sterile sensualists—try to gain warmth in the pale reflections of its light.

To create in the region of the body, or in the region of the mind, is to issue from the prison of the body: it is to ride upon the storm of life: it is to be He who Is. To create is to triumph over death.

Wretched is the sterile creature, that man or that woman who remains alone and lost upon the earth, scanning their withered bodies, and the sight of themselves from which no flame of life will ever leap! Wretched is the soul that does not feel its own fruitfulness, and know itself to be big with life and love, as a tree with blossom in the spring! The world may heap honours and benefits upon such a soul: it does but crown a corpse.

When Christopher was struck by the flash of lightning, an electric fluid coursed through his body: he trembled under the shock. It was as though on the high seas, in the dark night, he had suddenly sighted land. Or it was as though in a crowd he had gazed into two eyes saluting him. Often it would happen to him after hours of prostration when his mind was leaping desperately through the void. But more often still it came in moments when he was thinking of something else, talking to his mother, or walking through the streets. If he were in the street a certain human respect kept him from too loudly demonstrating his joy. But if he were at home nothing could keep him back. He would stamp. He would sound a blare of triumph: his mother knew that well, and she had come to know what it meant. She used to tell Christopher that he was like a hen that has laid an egg.

He was permeated with his musical imagination. Sometimes it took shape in an isolated phrase complete in itself: more often it would appear as a nebula enveloping a whole work: the structure of the work, its general lines, could be perceived through a veil, torn asunder here and there by dazzling phrases which stood out from the darkness with the clarity of sculpture. It was only a flash: sometimes others would come in quick succession: each lit up other corners of the night. But usually, the capricious force having once shown itself unexpectedly,

would disappear again for several days into its mysterious retreat, leaving behind it a luminous ray.

This delight in inspiration was so vivid that Christopher was disgusted by everything else. The experienced artist knows that inspiration is rare and that intelligence is left to complete the work of intuition: he puts his ideas under the press and squeezes out of them the last drop of the divine juices that are in them—(and if need be sometimes he does not shrink from diluting them with clear water). Christopher was too young and too sure of himself not to despise such contemptible practices. He dreamed impossibly of producing nothing that was not absolutely spontaneous. If he had not been deliberately blind he would certainly have seen the absurdity of his aims. No doubt he was at that time in a period of inward abundance in which there was no gap, no chink, through which boredom or emptiness could creep. Everything served as an excuse to his inexhaustible fecundity: everything that his eyes saw or his ears heard, everything with which he came in contact in his daily life: every look, every word, brought forth a crop of dreams. In the boundless heaven of his thoughts he saw circling millions of milky stars, rivers of living light. And yet, even then, there were moments when everything was suddenly blotted out. And although the night could not endure, although he had hardly time to suffer from these long silences of his soul, he did not escape a secret terror of that unknown power which came upon him, left him, came again, and disappeared.... How long, this time? Would it ever come again? His pride rejected that thought and said: "This force is myself. When it ceases to be, I shall cease to be: I shall kill myself." He never ceased to tremble: but it was only another delight.

But, if, for the moment, there was no danger of the spring running dry, Christopher was able already to perceive that it was never enough to fertilise a complete work. Ideas almost always appeared rawly: he had painfully to dig them out of the ore. And always they appeared without any sort of sequence, and by fits and starts: to unite them he had to bring to bear on them an element of reflection and deliberation and cold will, which fashioned them into new form. Christopher was too much of an artist not to do so: but he would not accept it: he forced himself to believe that he did no more than tran-

scribe what was within himself, while he was always compelled more or less to transform it so as to make it intelligible. More than that: sometimes he would absolutely forge a meaning for it. However violently the musical idea might come upon him it would often have been impossible for him to say what it meant. It would come surging up from the depths of life, from far beyond the limits of consciousness: and in that absolutely pure Force, which eluded common rhythms, consciousness could never recognise in it any of the motives which stirred in it, none of the human feelings which it defines and classifies: joys, sorrows, they were all merged in one single passion which was unintelligible, because it was above the intelligence. And yet, whether it understood or no, the intelligence needed to give a name to this force, to bind it down to one or other of the structures of logic, which man is for ever building indefatigably in the hive of his brain.

So Christopher convinced himself—he wished to do so—that the obscure power that moved him had an exact meaning, and that its meaning was in accordance with his will. His free instinct, risen from the unconscious depths, was willy-nilly forced to plod on under the yoke of reason with perfectly clear ideas which had nothing at all in common with it. And work so produced was no more than a lying juxtaposition of one of those great subjects that Christopher's mind had marked out for itself, and those wild forces which had an altogether different meaning unknown to himself.

He groped his way, head down, borne on by the contradictory forces warring in him, and hurling into his incoherent works a fiery and strong quality of life which he could not express, though he was joyously and proudly conscious of it.

The consciousness of his new vigour made him able for the first time to envisage squarely everything about him, everything that he had been taught to honour, everything that he had respected without question: and he judged it all with insolent freedom. The veil was rent: he saw the German lie.

Every race, every art has its hypocrisy. The world is fed with a little truth and many lies. The human mind is feeble: pure truth agrees with it but ill: its religion, its morality, its states, its poets, its artists, must all be presented to it swathed in lies. These lies are adapted to the mind of each race: they

vary from one to the other: it is they that make it so difficult for nations to understand each other, and so easy for them to despise each other. Truth is the same for all of us: but every nation has its own lie, which it calls its idealism: every creature therein breathes it from birth to death: it has become a condition of life: there are only a few men of genius who can break free from it through heroic moments of crisis, when they are alone in the free world of their thoughts.

It was a trivial thing which suddenly revealed to Christopher the lie of German art. It was not because it had not always been visible that he had not seen it: he was too near it to see it. Now the mountain appeared to his gaze because he had moved away from it.

He was at a concert of the *Städtische Tonhalle*. The concert was given in a large hall occupied by ten or twelve rows of little tables—about two or three hundred of them. At the end of the room was a stage where the orchestra was sitting. All round Christopher were officers dressed up in their long, dark coats—with broad, shaven faces, red, serious, and commonplace: women talking and laughing noisily, ostentatiously at their ease: jolly little girls smiling and showing all their teeth: and large men hidden behind their beards and spectacles, looking like kindly spiders with round eyes. They got up with every fresh glass to drink a toast: they did this almost religiously: their faces, their voices changed: it was as though they were saying Mass: they offered each other the libations, they drank of the chalice with a mixture of solemnity and buffoonery. The music was drowned under the conversation and the clinking of glasses. And yet everybody was trying to talk and eat quietly. The *Herr Konzertmeister*, a tall, bent old man, with a white beard hanging like a tail from his chin, and a long aquiline nose, with spectacles, looked like a philologist. All these types were familiar to Christopher. But on that day he had an inclination—he did not know why—to see them as caricatures. There are days like that when, for no apparent reason, the grotesque in people and things which in ordinary life passes unnoticed, suddenly leaps into view.

The programme of the music included the *Egmont* overture, a waltz of Waldteufel, *Tannhäuser's Pilgrimage to Rome*, the overture to the *Merry Wives* of Nicolai, the religious march of

Athalie, and a fantasia on the *North Star*. The orchestra played the Beethoven overture correctly, and the waltz deliciously. During the *Pilgrimage of Tannhäuser*, the uncorking of bottles was heard. A big man sitting at the table next to Christopher beat time to the *Merry Wives* by imitating Falstaff. A stout old lady, in a pale blue dress with a white belt, golden pince-nez on her flat nose, red arms, and an enormous waist, sang in a loud voice *Lieder* of Schumann and Brahms. She raised her eyebrows, made eyes at the wings, smiled with a smile that seemed to curdle on her moon-face, made exaggerated gestures which must certainly have called to mind the *café-concert* but for the majestic honesty which shone in her: this mother of a family played the part of the giddy girl, youth, passion: and Schumann's poetry had a faint smack of the nursery. The audience was in ecstasies. But they grew solemn and attentive when there appeared the Choral Society of the Germans of the South (*Süddeutschen Männer Liedertafel*), who alternately cooed and roared part songs full of feeling. There were forty, and they sang four parts: it seemed as though they had set themselves to free their execution of every trace of style that could properly be called choral: a hotch-potch of little melodious effects, little timid puling shades of sound, dying *pianissimos*, with sudden swelling, roaring *crescendos*, like someone beating on an empty box: no breadth or balance, a mawkish style: it was like Bottom:

"Let me play the lion... I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you as 'twere any nightingale."

Christopher listened from the beginning with growing amazement. There was nothing new in it all to him. He knew these concerts, the orchestra, the audience. But suddenly it all seemed to him false. All of it: even to what he most loved, the *Egmont* overture, in which the pompous disorder and correct agitation hurt him in that hour like a want of frankness. No doubt it was not Beethoven or Schumann that he heard, but their absurd interpreters, their cud-chewing audience whose crass stupidity was spread about their works like a heavy mist. No matter, there was in the works, even the most beautiful of them, a disturbing quality which Christopher had never before felt. What was it? He dared not analyse it, deeming it a sacrilege to question his beloved masters. But in vain did he shut his eyes to it: he had seen it. And, in spite of

himself, he went on seeing it: like the *Vergognosa* at Pisa he looked between his fingers.

He saw German art stripped. All of them—the great and the idiots—laid bare their souls with a complacent tenderness. Emotion overflowed, moral nobility trickled down, their hearts melted in distracted effusions: the sluice-gates were opened to the fearful German tender-heartedness: it weakened the energy of the stronger, it drowned the weaker under its greyish waters: it was a flood: in the depths of it slept German thought. And what thoughts were those of a Mendelssohn, a Brahms, a Schumann, and, following them, the whole legion of little writers of affected and tearful *Lieder!* Built on sand. Never rock. Wet and shapeless clay. It was all so foolish, so childish often, that Christopher could not believe that it never occurred to the audience. He looked about him: but he saw only gaping faces, convinced in advance of the beauties they were hearing and the pleasure that they ought to find in it. How could they admit their own right to judge for themselves? They were filled with respect for these hallowed names. What did they not respect? They were respectful before their programmes, before their glasses, before themselves. It was clear that mentally they dubbed everything excellent that remotely or nearly concerned them.

Christopher passed in review the audience and the music alternately: the music reflected the audience, the audience reflected the music. Christopher felt laughter overcoming him and he made faces. However, he controlled himself. But when the Germans of the South came and solemnly sang the *Confession* that reminded him of the blushes of a girl in love, Christopher could not contain himself. He shouted with laughter. Indignant cries of "Ssh!" were raised. His neighbours looked at him, scared: their honest, scandalised faces filled him with joy: he laughed louder than ever, he laughed, he laughed until he cried. Suddenly the audience grew angry. They cried: "Put him out!" He got up, and went, shrugging his shoulders, shaking with suppressed laughter. His departure caused a scandal. It was the beginning of hostilities between Christopher and his birthplace.

After that experience Christopher shut himself up and set himself to read once more the works of the "hallowed" musi-

cians. He was appalled to find that certain of the masters whom he loved most had *lied*. He tried hard to doubt it at first, to believe that he was mistaken. But no, there was no way out of it. He was staggered by the conglomeration of mediocrity and untruth which constitutes the artistic treasure of a great people. How many pages could bear examination!

From that time on he could begin to read other works, other masters, who were dear to him, only with a fluttering heart.... Alas! There was some spell cast upon him: always there was the same discomfiture. With some of them his heart was torn: it was as though he had lost a dear friend, as if he had suddenly seen that a friend in whom he had reposed entire confidence had been deceiving him for years. He wept for it. He did not sleep at night: he could not escape his torment. He blamed himself: perhaps he had lost his judgement? Perhaps he had become altogether an idiot? No, no. More than ever he saw the radiant beauty of the day and with more freshness and love than ever he felt the generous abundance of life: his heart was not deceiving him....

But for a long time he dared not approach those who were the best for him, the purest, the Holy of Holies. He trembled at the thought of bringing his faith in them to the test. But how resist the pitiless instinct of a brave and truthful soul, which will go on to the end, and see things as they are, whatever suffering may be got in doing so? So he opened the sacred works, he called upon the last reserve, the imperial guard.... At the first glance he saw that they were no more immaculate than the others. He had not the courage to go on. Every now and then he stopped and closed the book: like the son of Noah, he threw his cloak about his father's nakedness....

Then he was prostrate in the midst of all these ruins. He would rather have lost an arm, than have tampered with his blessed illusions. In his heart he mourned. But there was so much sap in him, so much reserve of life, that his confidence in art was not shaken. With a young man's naïve presumption he began life again as though no one had ever lived it before him. Intoxicated by his new strength, he felt—not without reason, perhaps—that with a very few exceptions there is almost no relation between living passion and the expression which art has striven to give to it. But he was mistaken in

thinking himself more happy or more true when he expressed it. As he was filled with passion it was easy for him to discover it at the back of what he had written: but no one else would have recognised it through the imperfect vocabulary with which he designated its variations. Many artists whom he condemned were in the same case. They had had, and had translated profound emotions: but the secret of their language had died with them.

Christopher was no psychologist: he was not bothered with all these arguments: what was dead for him had always been so. He revised his judgment of the past with all the confident and fierce injustice of youth. He stripped the noblest souls, and had no pity for their foibles. There were the rich melancholy, the distinguished fantasy, the kindly thinking emptiness of Mendelssohn. There were the bead-stringing and the affectation of Weber, his dryness of heart, his cerebral emotion. There was Liszt, the noble priest, the circus rider, neo-classical and vagabond, a mixture in equal doses of real and false nobility, of serene idealism and disgusting virtuosity. Schubert swallowed up by his sentimentality, drowned at the bottom of leagues of stale, transparent water. The men of the heroic ages, the demi-gods, the Prophets, the Fathers of the Church, were not spared. Even the great Sebastian, the man of ages, who bore in himself the past and the future—Bach—was not free of untruth, of fashionable folly, of school-chattering. The man who had seen God, the man who lived in God, seemed sometimes to Christopher to have had an insipid and sugared religion, a Jesuitical style, rococo. In his cantatas there were languorous and devout airs (dialogues of the Soul coquetting with Jesus) which sickened Christopher: then he seemed to see chubby cherubim with round limbs and flying draperies. And also he had a feeling that the genial *Cantor* always wrote in a closed room: his work smacked of stuffiness: there was not in his music that brave outdoor air that was breathed in others, not such great musicians, perhaps, but greater men—more human—than he. Like Beethoven or Händel. What hurt him in all of them, especially in the classics, was their lack of freedom: almost all their works were "constructed". Sometimes an emotion was filled out with all the commonplace of musical rhetoric, sometimes with a simple rhythm, an ornamental design, repeated, turned upside down, combined in every con-

ceivable way in a mechanical fashion. These symmetrical and twaddling constructions—classical and neo-classical sonatas and symphonies—exasperated Christopher, who, at that time, was not very sensible of the beauty of order, and vast and well-conceived plans. That seemed to him to be rather masons' work than musicians'.

But he was no less severe with the Romantics. It was a strange thing, and he was more surprised by it than anybody—but no musicians irritated him more than those who had pretended to be—and had actually been—the most free, the most spontaneous, the least constructive—those who, like Schumann, had poured drop by drop, minute by minute, into their innumerable little works, their whole life. He was the more indignantly in revolt against them as he recognised in them his adolescent soul and all the follies that he had vowed to pluck out of it. In truth, the candid Schumann could not be taxed with falsity: he hardly ever said anything that he had not felt. But that was just it: his example made Christopher understand that the worst falsity in German art came into it not when the artists tried to express something which they had not felt, but rather when they tried to express the feelings which they did in fact feel—*feelings which were false*. Music is an implacable mirror of the soul. The more a German musician is naïve and in good faith, the more he displays the weaknesses of the German soul, its uncertain depths, its soft tenderness, its want of frankness, its rather sly idealism, its incapacity for seeing itself, for daring to come face to face with itself. That false idealism is the secret sore even of the greatest—of Wagner. As he read his works Christopher ground his teeth. *Lohengrin* seemed to him a blatant lie. He loathed the huckstering chivalry, the hypocritical mummery, the hero without fear and without a heart, the incarnation of cold and selfish virtue admiring itself and most patently self-satisfied. He knew it too well, he had seen it in reality, the type of German Pharisee, foppish, impeccable, and hard, bowing down before its own image, the divinity to which it has no scruple about sacrificing others. *The Flying Dutchman* overwhelmed him with its massive sentimentality and its gloomy boredom. The loves of the barbarous decadents of the *Tetralogy* were of a sickening staleness. Siegmund carrying off his sister sang a tenor drawing-room song. Siegfried and Brünn-

hilde, like respectable German married people, in the *Götterdämmerung*, laid bare before each other, especially for the benefit of the audience, their pompous and voluble conjugal passion. Every sort of lie had arranged to meet in that work: false idealism, false Christianity, false Gothicism, false legend, false gods, false humans. Never did more monstrous convention appear than in that theatre which was to upset all the conventions. Neither eyes nor mind, nor heart could be deceived by it for a moment: if they were, then they must wish to be so. They did wish to be so. Germany was delighted with that doting, childish art, an art of brutes let loose, and mystic, namby-pamby little girls.

And Christopher could do nothing: as soon as he heard the music he was caught up like the others, more than the others, by the flood, and the diabolical will of the man who had let it loose. He laughed, and he trembled, and his cheeks burned, and he felt galloping armies rushing through him! And he thought that those who bore such storms within themselves might have all allowances made for them. What cries of joy he uttered when in the hallowed works which he could not read without trembling he felt once more his old emotion, ardent still, with nothing to tarnish the purity of what he loved! These were the glorious relics that he saved from the wreck. What happiness they gave him! It seemed to him that he had saved a part of himself. And was it not himself? These great Germans, against whom he revolted, were they not his blood, his flesh, his most precious life? He was only severe with them because he was severe with himself. Who loved them better than he? Who felt more than he the goodness of Schubert, the innocence of Haydn, the tenderness of Mozart, the great heroic heart of Beethoven? Who more often than he took refuge in the murmuring of the forests of Weber, and the cool shade of the cathedrals of Johann Sebastian, raising against the grey sky of the North, above the plains of Germany, their pile of stone, and their gigantic towers with their sun-tipped spires? But he suffered from their lies, and he could not forget them. He attributed them to the race, their greatness to themselves. He was wrong. Greatness and weaknesses belong equally to the race whose great, shifting thought flows like the greatest river of music and poetry at which Europe comes to drink. And in what other people would he have found the

simple purity which now made it possible for him to condemn it so harshly?

He had no notion of that. With the ingratitude of a spoiled child he turned against his mother the weapons which he had received from her. Later, later, he was to feel all that he owed to her, and how dear she was to him. . . .

But he was in a phase of blind reaction against all the idols of his childhood. He was angry with himself and with them because he had believed in them absolutely and passionately—and it was well that it was so. There is an age in life when we must dare to be unjust, when we must make a clean sweep of all admiration and respect got at second-hand, and deny everything—truth and untruth—everything which we have not of ourselves known for truth. Through education, and through everything that he sees and hears about him, a child absorbs so many lies and blind follies mixed with the essential verities of life, that the first duty of the adolescent who wishes to grow into a healthy man is to sacrifice everything.

Christopher was passing through that crisis of healthy disgust. His instinct was impelling him to eliminate from his life all the undigested elements which encumbered it.

First of all to go was that sickening sweet tenderness which sucked away the soul of Germany like a damp and mouldy river-bed. Light! Light! A rough, dry wind which should sweep away the miasmas of the swamp, the misty staleness of the *Lieder, Liedchen, Liedlein,* as numerous as drops of rain in which inexhaustibly the Germanic *Gemüt* is poured forth: the countless things like *Sehnsucht* (Desire), *Heimweh* (Homesickness) *Aufschwung* (Soaring), *Frage* (A question). *Warum?* (Why?), *an den Mond* (To the Moon), *an die Sterne* (To the Stars), *an die Nachtigall* (To the Nightingale), *an den Frühling* (To Spring), *an den Sonnenschein* (To Sunshine): like *Frühlingslied* (Spring Song), *Frühlingslust* (Delights of Spring), *Frühlingsgruss* (Hail to the Spring), *Frühlingsfahrt* (A Spring Journey), *Frühlingsnacht* (A Spring Night), *Frühlingsbotschaft* (The Message of Spring): like *Stimme der Liebe* (The Voice of Love), *Sprache der Liebe* (The Language of Love), *Trauer der Liebe* (Love's Sorrow), *Geist der Liebe* (The Spirit of Love), *Fülle der Liebe* (The Fulness of Love): like *Blumenlied* (The Song of the Flowers), *Blumenbrief* (The Let-

ter of the Flowers), *Blumengruss* (Flower's Greeting): like *Herzeleid* (Heart Pangs), *Mein Herz ist schwer* (My Heart is Heavy), *Mein Herz ist betrübt* (My Heart is Troubled), *Mein Aug' ist trüb* (My Eye is Heavy): like the candid and silly dialogues with the *Röselein* (The Little Rose), with the brook, with the turtle dove, with the lark: like those idiotic questions: "*If the briar could have no thorns?*"—"*Is an old husband like a lark who has built a nest?*"—"*Is she newly plighted?*": the whole deluge of stale tenderness, stale emotion, stale melancholy, stale poetry.... How many lovely things profaned, rare things, used in season or out! For the worst of it was that it was all useless: a habit of undressing their hearts in public, a fond and foolish propensity of the honest people of Germany for plunging loudly into confidences. With nothing to say they were always talking! Would their chatter never cease? As well bid frogs in a pond be silent.

It was in the expression of love that Christopher was most rawly conscious of untruth: for he was in a position to compare it with the reality. The conventional love songs, lachrymose and proper, contained nothing like the desires of man or the heart of woman. And yet the people who had written them must have loved at least once in their lives! Was it possible that they could have loved like that? No, no, they had lied, as they always did, they had lied to themselves: they had tried to idealise themselves.... Idealism! That meant that they were afraid of looking at life squarely, were incapable of seeing things like a man, as they are. Everywhere the same timidity, the same lack of manly frankness. Everywhere the same chilly enthusiasm, the same pompous lying solemnity, in their patriotism, in their drinking, in their religion. The *Trinklieder* (Drinking Songs) were prosopopœia to wine and the bowl: "*Du, herrlich Glas...*" ("Thou, noble glass..."). Faith —the one thing in the world which should be spontaneous, springing from the soul like an unexpected sudden stream—was a manufactured article, a commodity of trade. Their patriotic songs were made for docile flocks of sheep baaing in unison.... Shout, then! What! Must you go on lying—"*idealising*"—till you are surfeited, till it brings you to slaughter and madness!...

Christopher ended by hating all idealism. He preferred frank brutality to such lying. But at heart he was more of an

idealist than the rest, and he had not—he could not have—any more real enemies than the brutal realists whom he thought he preferred.

He was blinded by passion. He was frozen by the mist, the anæmic lying, "the sunless phantom Ideas". With his whole being he reached upwards to the sun. In his youthful contempt for the hypocrisy with which he was surrounded, or for what he took to be hypocrisy, he did not see the high, practical wisdom of the race which little by little had built up for itself its grandiose idealism in order to suppress its savage instincts, or to turn them to account. Not arbitrary reasons, not moral and religious codes, not legislators and statesmen, priests and philosophers, transform the souls of peoples and often impose upon them a new nature: but centuries of misfortune and experience, which forge the life of the peoples who have the will to live.

And yet Christopher went on composing: and his compositions were not exempt from the faults which he found in others. In him creation was an irresistible necessity which would not submit to the rules which his intelligence laid down for it. No man creates from reason, but from necessity. It is not enough to have recognised the untruth and affectation inherent in the majority of the feelings to avoid falling into them: long and painful endeavour is necessary: nothing is more difficult than to be absolutely true in modern society with its crushing heritage of indolent habits handed down through generations. It is especially difficult for those people, those nations who are possessed by an indiscreet mania for letting their hearts speak—for making them speak—unceasingly, when most generally they had much better have been silent.

Christopher's heart was very German in that: it had not yet learned the virtue of silence: and that virtue did not belong to his age. He had inherited from his father a need for talking, and talking loudly. He knew it and struggled against it: but the conflict paralysed part of his forces. And he had another gift of heredity, no less burdensome, which had come to him from his grandfather: an extraordinary difficulty—in expressing himself exactly. He was the son of a virtuoso. He was conscious of the dangerous attraction of virtuosity: a physical

pleasure, the pleasure of skill, of agility, of satisfied muscular activity, the pleasure of conquering, of dazzling, of enthralling in his own person the many-headed audience: an excusable pleasure, in a young man almost an innocent pleasure, though none the less destructive of art and soul: Christopher knew it: it was in his blood: he despised it, but all the same he yielded to it.

And so, torn between the instincts of his race and those of his genius, weighed down by the burden of a parasitical past, which covered him with a crust that he could not break through, he floundered along, and was much nearer than he thought to all that he shunned and banned. All his compositions were a mixture of truth and turgidness, of lucid strength and faltering stupidity. It was only in rare moments that his personality could pierce the casing of the dead personality which hampered his movements.

He was alone. He had no guide to help him out of the mire. When he thought he was out of it he slipped back again. He went blindly on, wasting his time and strength in futile efforts. He was not spared trial: and in the disorder of his creative striving he never knew what was of greatest worth in what he created. He tied himself up in absurd projects, symphonic poems, which pretended to philosophy and were of monstrous dimensions. He was too sincere to be able to hold to them for long together: and he would discard them in disgust before he had sketched out a single movement. Or he would set out to translate into overtures the most inaccessible works of poetry. Then he would flounder about in a domain which was not his own. When he drew up scenarios for himself—(for he stuck at nothing)—they were idiotic: and when he attacked the great works of Goethe, Hebbel, Kleist, or Shakespeare, he understood them all wrong. It was not want of intelligence but want of the critical spirit: he could not yet understand others, he was too much taken up with himself: he found himself everywhere with his naïve and turgid soul.

But besides these monsters which were not really begotten, he wrote a quantity of small pieces, which were the immediate expression of passing emotions—the most eternal of all: musical thoughts, *Lieder*. In this as in other things he was in passionate reaction against current practices. He would take up the most famous poems, already set to music, and was im-

pertinent enough to try to treat them differently and with greater truth than Schumann and Schubert. Sometimes he would try to give to the poetic figures of Goethe: to Mignon, the Harpist in *Wilhelm Meister,* their individual character, exact and changing. Sometimes he would tackle certain love songs which the weakness of the artists and the dulness of the audience in tacit agreement had clothed about with sickly sentimentality: and he would unclothe them: he would restore to them their rough, crude sensuality. In a word, he set out to make passions and people live for themselves and not to serve as toys for German families seeking an easy emotionalism on Sundays when they sat about in some *Biergarten.*

But generally he would find the poets, even the greatest of them, too literary: and he would select the simplest texts for preference: texts of old *Lieder,* jolly old songs, which he had read perhaps in some improving work: he would take care not to preserve their choral character: he would treat them with a fine, lively, and altogether lay audacity. Or he would take words from the Gospel, or proverbs, sometimes even words heard by chance, scraps of dialogues of the people, children's thoughts: words often awkward and prosaic in which there was only pure feeling. With them he was at his ease, and he would reach a depth with them which was not in his other compositions, a depth which he himself never suspected.

Good or bad, more often bad than good, his works as a whole had abounding vitality. They were not altogether new: far from it. Christopher was often banal, through his very sincerity: he repeated sometimes forms already used because they exactly rendered his thought, because he also felt in that way and not otherwise. Nothing would have induced him to try to be original: it seemed to him that a man must be very commonplace to burden himself with such an idea. He tried to be himself, to say what he felt, without worrying as to whether what he said had been said before him or not. He took a pride in believing that it was the best way of being original and that Christopher had only been and only would be alive once. With the magnificent impudence of youth, nothing seemed to him to have been done before: and everything seemed to him to be left for doing—or for doing again. And the feeling of this inward fulness of life, of a life stretching endless before him, brought him to a state of exuberant and

rather indiscreet happiness. He was perpetually in a state of jubilation, which had no need of joy: it would adapt itself to sorrow: its source overflowed with life, was, in its strength, mother of all happiness and virtue. To live, to live too much! ... A man who does not feel within himself this intoxication of strength, this jubilation in living—even in the depths of misery—is not an artist. That is the touchstone. True greatness is shown in this power of rejoicing through joy and sorrow. A Mendelssohn or a Brahms, gods of the mists of October, and of fine rain, have never known the divine power.

Christopher was conscious of it: and he showed his joy simply, impudently. He saw no harm in it, he only asked to share it with others. He did not see how such joy hurts the majority of men, who never can possess it and are always envious of it. For the rest he never bothered about pleasing or displeasing: he was sure of himself, and nothing seemed to him simpler than to communicate his conviction to others—to conquer. Instinctively he compared his riches with the general poverty of the makers of music: and he thought that it would be very easy to make his superiority recognised. Too easy, even. He had only to show himself.

He showed himself.

They were waiting for him.

Christopher had made no secret of his feelings. Since he had become aware of German Pharisaism, which refuses to see things as they are, he had made it a law for himself that he would be absolutely, continually, uncompromisingly sincere in everything without regard for anything or anybody or himself. And as he could do nothing without going to extremes, he was extravagant in his sincerity: he would say outrageous things and scandalise people a thousand times less naïve than himself. He never dreamed that it might annoy them. When he realized the idiocy of some hallowed composition, he would make haste to impart his discovery to everybody he encountered: musicians of the orchestra, or amateurs of his acquaintance. He would pronounce the most absurd judgments with a beaming face. At first no one took him seriously: they laughed at his freaks. But it was not long before they found that he was always reverting to them, insisting on them in a way that was really bad taste. It became evident that Christopher be-

lieved in his paradoxes: and they became less amusing. He was a nuisance: at concerts he would make ironic remarks in a loud voice, or would express his scorn for the glorious masters in no veiled fashion wherever he might be.

Everything passed from mouth to mouth in the little town: not a word was lost. People were already affronted by his conduct during the past year. They had not forgotten the scandalous fashion in which he had shown himself abroad with Ada and the troublous times of the sequel. He had forgotten it himself: one day wiped out another, and he was very different from what he had been two months before. But others had not forgotten: those who, in all small towns, take upon themselves scrupulously to note down all the faults, all the imperfections, all the sad, ugly, and unpleasant happenings concerning their neighbours, so that nothing is ever forgotten. Christopher's new extravagances were naturally set side by side with his former indiscretions, in the scroll. The former explained the latter. The outraged feelings of offended morality were now bolstered up by those of scandalised good taste. The kindliest of them said:

"He is trying to be particular."

But most alleged:

"*Total verrückt!*" (Absolutely mad.)

An opinion no less severe and even more dangerous was beginning to find currency—an opinion assured of success by reason of its illustrious origin: it was said that, at the Palace, whither Christopher still went upon his official duties, he had had the bad taste in conversation with the Grand Duke himself, with revolting lack of decency, to give vent to his ideas concerning the illustrious masters: it was said that he had called Mendelssohn's *Elijah* "a clerical humbug's paternoster", and he had called certain *Lieder* of Schumann "*Backfisch music*": and that in the face of the declared preference of the august Princes for those works! The Grand Duke had cut short his impertinences by saying dryly:

"To hear you, sir, one would doubt your being a German."

This vengeful utterance, coming from so lofty an eminence, reached the lowest depths: and everybody who thought he had reason to be annoyed with Christopher, either for his success, or for some more personal if not more cogent reason, did not fail to call to mind that he he was not in fact pure German.

His father's family, it was remembered, came originally from Belgium. It was not surprising, therefore, that this immigrant should decry the national glories. That explained everything and German vanity found reasons therein for greater self-esteem, and at the same time for despising its adversary.

Christopher himself most substantially fed this Platonic vengeance. It is very imprudent to criticise others when you are yourself on the point of challenging criticism. A cleverer or less frank artist would have shown more modesty and more respect for his predecessors. But Christopher could see no reason for hiding his contempt for mediocrity or his joy in his own strength, and his joy was shown in no temperate fashion. Although from childhood Christopher had been turned in upon himself for want of any creature to confide in, of late he had come by a need of expansiveness. He had too much joy for himself: his breast was too small to contain it: he would have burst if he had not shared his delight. Failing a friend, he had confided in his colleague in the orchestra, the second *Kapellmeister*, Siegmund Ochs, a young Wurtemberger, a good fellow, though crafty, who showed him an effusive deference. Christopher did not distrust him: and, even if he had, how could it have occurred to him that it might be harmful to confide his joy to one who did not care, or even to an enemy? Ought they not rather to be grateful to him? Was it not for them also that he was working? He brought happiness for all, friends and enemies alike. He had no idea that there is nothing more difficult than to make men accept a new happiness: they almost prefer their old misery: they need food that has been masticated for ages. But what is most intolerable to them is the thought that they owe such happiness to another. They cannot forgive that offence until there is no way of evading it: and in any case, they do contrive to make the giver pay dearly for it.

There were, then, a thousand reasons why Christopher's confidences should not be kindly received by anybody. But there were a thousand and one reasons why they should not be acceptable to Siegmund Ochs. The first *Kapellmeister*, Tobias Pfeiffer, was on the point of retiring: and, in spite of his youth, Christopher had every chance of succeeding him. Ochs was too good a German not to recognise that Christopher was worthy of the position, since the Court was on his side.

But he had too good an opinion of himself not to believe that he would have been more worthy had the Court known him better. And so he received Christopher's effusions with a strange smile when he arrived at the theatre in the morning with a face that he tried hard to make serious, though it beamed in spite of himself.

"Well?" he would say slyly as he came up to him, "another masterpiece?"

Christopher would take his arm.

"Ah! my friend. It is the best of all... If you could hear it!... Devil take me, it is too beautiful! There has never been anything like it. God help the poor audience: They will only long for one thing when they have heard it: to die."

His words did not fall upon deaf ears. Instead of smiling, or of chaffing Christopher about his childish enthusiasm—he would have been the first to laugh at it and beg pardon if he had been made to feel the absurdity of it—Ochs went into ironic ecstasies: he drew Christopher on to further enormities: and when he left him made haste to repeat them all, making them even more grotesque. The little circle of musicians chuckled over them: and everyone was impatient for the opportunity of judging the unhappy compositions. They were all judged beforehand.

At last they appeared—Christopher had chosen from the better of his works an overture to the *Judith* of Hebbel, the savage energy of which had attracted him, in his reaction against German atony, although he was beginning to lose his taste for it, knowing intuitively the unnaturalness of such assumption of genius, always and at all costs. He had added a symphony which bore the bombastic title of the Basle Boecklin, "*The Dream of Life*" and the motto: "*Vita somnium breve.*" A songcycle completed the programme, with a few classical works, and a *Festmarsch* by Ochs, which Christopher had kindly offered to include in his concert, though he knew it to be mediocre.

Nothing much happened during the rehearsals. Although the orchestra understood absolutely nothing of the compositions it was playing, and everybody was privately disconcerted by the oddities of the new music, they had no time to form an opinion: they were not capable of doing so until the public had pronounced on it. Besides, Christopher's confidence im-

posed on the artists, who, like every good German orchestra, were docile and disciplined. His only difficulties were with the singer. She was the blue lady of the *Tonhalle* concert. She was famous through Germany: the domestic creature sang Brünnhilde and Kundry at Dresden and Bayreuth with undoubted lung-power. But if in the Wagnerian school she had learned the art of which that school is justly proud, the art of good articulation, of projecting the consonants through space, and of battering the gaping audience with the vowels as with a club, she had not learned—designedly—the art of being natural. She provided for every word: everything was accentuated: the syllables moved with leaden feet, and there was a tragedy in every sentence. Christopher implored her to moderate her dramatic power a little. She tried at first graciously enough: but her natural heaviness and her need for letting her voice go carried her away. Christopher became nervous. He told the virtuous lady that he had tried to make human beings speak with his speaking-trumpet and not the dragon Fafner. She took his insolence in bad part— naturally. She said that, thank Heaven! she knew what singing was, and that she had had the honour of interpreting the *Lieder* of Maestro Brahms, in the presence of that great man, and that he had never tired of hearing her.

"So much the worse! So much the worse!" cried Christopher.

She asked him with a haughty smile to be kind enough to explain the meaning of his enigmatic remark. He replied that never in his life had Brahms known what it was to be natural, that his eulogies were the worst possible censure, and that although he—Christopher—was not very polite, as she had justly observed, never would he have gone so far as to say anything so unpleasant.

The argument went on in this fashion: and the lady insisted on singing in her own way, with heavy pathos and melodramatic effects—until one day when Christopher declared coldly that he saw the truth: it was her nature and nothing could change it: but since the *Lieder* could not be sung properly, they should not be sung at all: he withdrew them from the programme. It was on the eve of the concert, and they were counting on the *Lieder:* she had talked about them: she was musician enough to appreciate certain of these qualities: Christopher insulted her: and as she was not sure that the

morrow's concert would not set the seal on the young man's fame, she did not wish to quarrel with a rising star. She gave way suddenly: and during the last rehearsal she submitted docilely to all Christopher's wishes. But she had made up her mind—at the concert—to have her own way.

The day came. Christopher had no anxiety. He was too full of his music to be able to judge it. He realised that some of his works in certain places bordered on the ridiculous. But what did that matter? Nothing great can be written without touching the ridiculous. To reach the heart of things it is necessary to dare human respect, politeness, modesty, the timidity of social lies under which the heart is stifled. If nobody is to be affronted and success attained, a man must be resigned all his life to remain bound by convention and to give to second-rate people the second-rate truth, mitigated, diluted, which they are capable of receiving: he must dwell in prison all his life. A man is great only when he has set his foot on such anxieties. Christopher trampled them underfoot. Let them hiss him: he was sure of not leaving them indifferent. He conjured up the faces that certain people of his acquaintance would make as they heard certain rather bold passages. He expected bitter criticism: he smiled at it already. In any case they would have to be blind—or deaf—to deny that there was force in it—pleasant or otherwise, what did it matter? Pleasant! Pleasant! . . . Force! That is enough. Let it go its way, and bear all before it, like the Rhine! . . .

He had one setback. The Grand Duke did not come. The royal box was only occupied by Court people, a few ladies-in-waiting. Christopher was irritated by it. He thought: "The fool is cross with me. He does not know what to think of my work: he is afraid of compromising himself." He shrugged his shoulders, pretending not to be put out by such idiocy. Others paid more attention to it: it was the first lesson for him, a menace of his future.

The public had not shown much more interest than the Grand Duke: quite a third of the hall was empty. Christopher could not help thinking bitterly of the crowded halls at his concerts when he was a child. He would not have been surprised by the change if he had had more experience: it would have seemed natural to him that there were fewer people

come to hear him when he made good music than when he made bad: for it is not music but the musician in which the greater part of the public is interested: and it is obvious that a musician who is a man and like everybody else is much less interesting than a musician in a child's little trousers or short frock, who tickles sentimentality or amuses idleness.

After waiting in vain for the hall to fill, Christopher decided to begin. He tried to pretend that it was better so, saying, "A few friends but good." His optimism did not last long.

His pieces were played in silence. There is a silence in an audience which seems big and overflowing with love. But there was nothing in this. Nothing. Utter sleep. Blankness. Every phrase seemed to drop into depths of indifference. With his back turned to the audience, busy with his orchestra, Christopher was fully aware of everything that was happening in the hall, with those inner antennæ, with which every true musician is endowed, so that he knows whether what he is playing is waking an echo in the hearts about him. He went on conducting and growing excited while he was frozen by the cold mist of boredom rising from the stalls and the boxes behind him.

At last the overture was ended: and the audience applauded. It applauded coldly, politely, and was then silent. Christopher would rather have had them hoot.... A hiss! One hiss! Anything to give a sign of life, or at least of reaction against his work!... Nothing. He looked at the audience. The people were looking at each other, each trying to find out what the other thought. They did not succeed and relapsed into indifference.

The music went on. The symphony was played. Christopher found it hard to go on to the end. Several times he was on the point of throwing down his bâton and running away. Their apathy overtook him: at last he could not understand what he was conducting: he could not breathe: he felt that he was falling into fathomless boredom. There was not even the whispered ironic comment which he had anticipated at certain passages: the audience were reading their programmes. Christopher heard the pages turned all together with a dry rustling: and then once more there was silence until the last chord, when the same polite applause showed that they had not understood that the symphony was finished. And yet there were four pairs of hands went on clapping when the others

had finished: but they awoke no echo, and stopped ashamed: that made the emptiness seem more empty, and the little incident served to show the audience how bored it had been.

Christopher took a seat in the middle of the orchestra: he dared not look to right or left. He wanted to cry: and at the same time he was quivering with rage. He wanted to get up and shout at them: "You bore me! Ah! How you bore me! I cannot bear it! . . . Go away! Go away, all of you! . . ."

The audience woke up a little: they were expecting the singer—they were accustomed to applauding her. In that ocean of new music in which they were drifting without a compass, she at least was sure, a known land, and a solid, in which there was no danger of being lost. Christopher divined their thoughts exactly: and he laughed bitterly. The singer was no less conscious of the expectancy of the audience: Christopher saw that in her regal airs when he came and told her that it was her turn to appear. They looked at each other inimically. Instead of offering her his arm, Christopher thrust his hands into his pockets and let her go on alone. Furious and out of countenance she passed him. He followed her with a bored expression. As soon as she appeared the audience gave her an ovation: that made everybody happier: every face brightened, the audience grew interested, and glasses were brought into play. Certain of her power she tackled the *Lieder* in her own way, of course, and absolutely disregarded Christopher's remarks of the evening before. Christopher, who was accompanying her, went pale. He had foreseen her rebellion. At the first change that she made he tapped on the piano and said angrily:

"No!"

She went on. He whispered behind her back in a low voice of fury:

"No! No! Not like that! . . . Not that!"

Unnerved by his fierce growls, which the audience could not hear, though the orchestra caught every syllable, she stuck to it, dragging her notes, making pauses like organ stops. He paid no heed to them and went ahead: in the end they got out of time. The audience did not notice it: for some time they had been saying that Christopher's music was not made to seem pleasant or right to the ear: but Christopher, who was

not of that opinion, was making lunatic grimaces: and at last he exploded. He stopped short in the middle of a bar:

"Stop," he shouted.

She was carried on by her own impetus for half a bar and then stopped:

"That's enough," he said dryly.

There was a moment of amazement in the audience. After a few seconds he said icily:

"Begin again!"

She looked at him in stupefaction: her hands trembled: she thought for a moment of throwing his book at his head: afterwards she did not understand how it was that she did not do so. But she was overwhelmed by Christopher's authority and his unanswerable tone of voice: she began again. She sang the whole song cycle, without changing one shade of meaning, or a single movement: for she felt that he would spare her nothing: and she shuddered at the thought of a fresh insult.

When she had finished the audience recalled her frantically. They were not applauding the *Lieder* (they would have applauded just the same if she had sung any others) but the famous singer who had grown old in harness: they knew that they could safely admire her. Besides, they wanted to make up to her for the insult she had just received. They were not quite sure, but they did vaguely understand that the singer had made a mistake: and they thought it indecent of Christopher to call their attention to it. They encored the songs. But Christopher shut the piano firmly.

The singer did not notice his insolence: she was too much upset to think of singing again. She left the stage hurriedly and shut herself up in her box: and then for a quarter of an hour she relieved her heart of the flood of wrath and rage that was pent up in it: a nervous attack, a deluge of tears, indignant outcries and imprecations against Christopher—she omitted nothing. Her cries of anger could be heard through the closed door. Those of her friends who had made their way there told everybody when they left that Christopher had behaved like a cad. Opinion travels quickly in a concert hall. And so when Christopher went to his desk for the last piece of music the audience was stormy. But it was not his composition: it was the *Festmarsch* by Ochs, which Christopher had kindly included in his programme. The audience—who were quite at

their ease with the dull music—found a very simple method of displaying their disapproval of Christopher without going so far as to hiss him: they acclaimed Ochs ostentatiously, recalled the composer two or three times, and he appeared readily. And that was the end of the concert.

The Grand Duke and everybody at the Court—the bored, gossiping little provincial town—lost no detail of what had happened. The papers which were friendly towards the singer made no allusion to the incident: but they all agreed in exalting her art while they only mentioned the titles of the *Lieder* which she had sung. They published only a few lines about Christopher's other compositions, and they all said almost the same things! "... Knowledge of counterpoint. Complicated writing. Lack of inspiration. No melody. Written with the head, not with the heart. Want of sincerity. Trying to be original...." Followed a paragraph on true originality, that of the masters who are dead and buried, Mozart, Beethoven, Loewe, Schubert, Brahms, "those who are original without thinking of it." Then by a natural transition they passed to the revival at the Grand Ducal Theatre of the *Nachtlager von Granada* of Konradin Kreutzer: a long account was given of "the delicious music, as fresh and jolly as when it was first written."

Christopher's compositions met with absolute and astonished lack of comprehension from the most kindly disposed critics: veiled hostility from those who did not like him, and were arming themselves for later ventures: and from the general public, guided by neither friendly nor hostile critics, silence. Left to its own thoughts, the general public does not think at all: that goes without saying.

Christopher was bowled over.

And yet there was nothing surprising in his defeat. There were reasons, three to one, why his compositions should not please. They were immature. They were, secondly, too advanced to be understood at once. And, lastly, people were only too glad to give a lesson to the impertinent youngster. But Christopher was not cool-headed enough to admit that his reverse was legitimate. He had none of that serenity which the true artist gains from the mournful experience of long misunderstanding at the hands of men and their incurable stupid-

ity. His naïve confidence in the public and in success which he thought he could easily gain because he deserved it, crumbled away. He would have thought it natural to have enemies. But what staggered him was to find that he had not a single friend. Those on whom he had counted, those who hitherto had seemed to be interested in everything that he wrote, had not given him a single word of encouragement since the concert. He tried to probe them: they took refuge behind vague words. He insisted, he wanted to know what they really thought: the most sincere of them referred back to his former works, his foolish early efforts. More than once in his life he was to hear his new works condemned by comparison with the older ones—and that by the same people who, a few years before, had condemned his older works when they were new: that is the usual ordering of these things. Christopher did not like it: he exclaimed loudly. If people did not like him, well and good: he accepted that: it even pleased him, since he could not be friends with everybody. But that people should pretend to be fond of him and not allow him to grow up, that they should try to force him all his life to remain a child, was beyond the pale! What is good at twelve is not good at twenty: and he hoped not to stay at that, but to change and to go on changing always.... These idiots who tried to stop life!... What was interesting in his childish compositions was not their childishness and silliness, but the force in them hungering for the future. And they were trying to kill his future!... No, they had never understood what he was, they had never loved him, never then or now: they only loved the weakness and vulgarity in him, everything that he had in common with others, and not *himself*, not what he really was: their friendship was a misunderstanding....

He was exaggerating, perhaps. It often happens with quite nice people who are incapable of liking new work which they sincerely love when it is twenty years old. New life smacks too strong for their weak senses: the scent of it must evaporate in the winds of Time. A work of art only becomes intelligible to them when it is crusted over with the dust of years.

But Christopher could not admit of not being understood when he was *present*, and of being understood when he was *past*. He preferred to think that he was not understood at all, in any case, ever. And he raged against it. He was foolish

enough to want to make himself understood, to explain himself, to argue. Although no good purpose was served thereby: he would have had to reform the taste of his time. But he was afraid of nothing. He was determined by hook or by crook to clean up German taste. But it was utterly impossible: he could not convince anybody by means of conversation, in which he found it difficult to find words, and expressed himself with an excess of violence about the great musicians and even about the man to whom he was talking: he only succeeded in making a few more enemies. He would have had to prepare his ideas beforehand, and then to force the public to hear him....

And just then, at the appointed hour, his star—his evil star—gave him the means of doing so.

He was sitting in the restaurant of the theatre in a group of musicians belonging to the orchestra whom he was scandalising by his artistic judgments. They were not all of the same opinion: but they were all ruffled by the freedom of his language. Old Krause, the alto, a good fellow and a good musician, who sincerely loved Christopher, tried to turn the conversation: he coughed, then looked out for an opportunity of making a pun. But Christopher did not hear him: he went on: and Krause mourned and thought:

"What makes him say such things? God bless him! You can think these things: but you must not say them."

The odd thing was that he also thought "these things": at least, he had a glimmering of them, and Christopher's words roused many doubts in him: but he had not the courage to confess it, or openly to agree—half from fear of compromising himself, half from modesty and distrust of himself.

Weigl, the cornet-player, did not want to know anything: he was ready to admire anything, or anybody, good or bad, star or gas-jet: everything was the same to him: there were no degrees in his admiration: he admired, admired, admired. It was a vital necessity to him: it hurt him when anybody tried to curb him.

Old Kuh, the cellist, suffered even more. He loved bad music with all his heart. Everything that Christopher hounded down with his sarcasm and invective was infinitely dear to him: instinctively his choice pitched on the most conventional works: his soul was a reservoir of tearful and high-

flown emotion. Indeed, he was not dishonest in his tender regard for all the sham great men. It was when he tried to pretend that he liked the real great men that he was lying to himself—in perfect innocence. There are "Brahmins" who think to find in their God the breath of old men of genius: they love Beethoven in Brahms. Kuh went one better: he loved Brahms in Beethoven.

But the most enraged of all with Christopher's paradoxes was Spitz, the bassoon. It was not so much his musical instinct that was wounded as his natural servility. One of the Roman Emperors wished to die standing. Spitz wished to die, as he had lived, crawling: that was his natural position: it was delightful to him to grovel at the feet of everything that was official, hallowed, "arrived": and he was beside himself when anybody tried to keep him from playing the lackey, comfortably.

So Kuh groaned, Weigl threw up his hands in despair, Krause made jokes, and Spitz shouted in a shrill voice. But Christopher went on imperturbably shouting louder than the rest: and saying monstrous things about Germany and the Germans.

At the next table a young man was listening to him and rocking with laughter. He had black curly hair, fine, intelligent eyes, a large nose, which at its end could not make up its mind to go either to right or left, and rather than go straight on, went to both sides at once, thicks lips, and a clever, mobile face: he was following everything that Christopher said, hanging on his lips, reflecting every word with a sympathetic and yet mocking attention, wrinkling up his forehead, his temples, the corners of his eyes, round his nostrils and cheeks, grimacing with laughter, and every now and then shaking all over convulsively. He did not join in the conversation, but he did not miss a word of it. He showed his joy especially when he saw Christopher, involved in some argument and heckled by Spitz, flounder about, stammer, and stutter with anger, until he had found the word he was seeking—a rock with which to crush his adversary. And his delight knew no bounds when Christopher, swept along by his passions far beyond the capacity of his thought, enunciated monstrous paradoxes which made his hearers snort.

At last they broke up, each of them tired out with feeling

and alleging his own superiority. As Christopher, the last to go, was leaving the room he was accosted by the young man who had listened to his words with such pleasure. He had not yet noticed him. The other politely removed his hat, smiled, and asked permission to introduce himself:

"Franz Mannheim."

He begged pardon for his indiscretion in listening to the argument, and congratulated Christopher on the *maestria* with which he had pulverized his opponents. He was still laughing at the thought of it. Christopher was glad to hear it, and looked at him a little distrustfully:

"Seriously?" he asked. "You are not laughing at me?"

The other swore by the gods. Christopher's face lit up.

"Then you think I am right? You are of my opinion?"

"Well," said Mannheim, "I am not a musician. I know nothing of music. The only music I like—(if it is not too flattering to say so)—is yours.... That may show you that my taste is not so bad...."

"Oh!" said Christopher sceptically, though he was flattered all the same, "that proves nothing."

"You are difficult to please.... Good!... I think as you do: that proves nothing. And I don't venture to judge what you say of German musicians. But, anyhow, it is so true of the Germans in general, the old Germans, all the romantic idiots with their rancid thought, their sloppy emotion, their senile reiteration which we are asked to admire, '*the eternal Yesterday, which has always been, and always will be, and will be law tomorrow because it is law today....*'"

He recited a few lines of the famous passage in Schiller:

"*... Das ewig Gestrige*
Das immer war und immer wiederkehrt..."

"Himself, first of all!" He stopped in the middle of his recitation.

"Who?" asked Christopher.

"The pump-maker who wrote that!"

Christopher did not understand. But Mannheim went on:

"I should like to have a general cleaning up of art and thought every fifty years—nothing to be left standing."

"A little drastic," said Christopher, smiling.

"No, I assure you. Fifty years is too much: I should say,

thirty.... And even less! ... It is a hygienic measure. One does not keep one's ancestors in one's house. One gets rid of them, when they are dead, and sends them elsewhere, there respectably to rot, and one places stones on them to be quite sure that they will not come back. Nice people put flowers on them, too. I don't mind, if they like it. All I ask is to be left in peace. I leave them alone! Each for his own side, say I: the dead and the living."

"There are some dead who are more alive than the living."

"No, no! It would be more true to say that there are some living who are more dead than the dead."

"Maybe. In any case, there are old things which are still young."

"Then, if they are still young, we can find them for ourselves.... But I don't believe it. What has been good once never is good again. Nothing is good but change. Before all, we have to rid ourselves of the old men and things. There are too many of them in Germany. Death to them, say I!"

Christopher listened to these squibs attentively and laboured to discuss them: he was in part in sympathy with them, he recognised certain of his own thoughts in them: and at the same time he felt a little embarrassed at having them so blown out to the point of caricature. But as he assumed that everybody else was as serious as himself, he thought that perhaps Mannheim, who seemed to be more learned than himself and spoke more easily, was right, and was drawing the logical conclusions from his principles. Vain Christopher, whom so many people could not forgive for his faith in himself, was really most naïvely modest, often tricked by his modesty when he was with those who were better educated than himself—especially when they consented not to plume themselves on it to avoid an awkward discussion. Mannheim, who was amusing himself with his own paradoxes, and from one sally to another had reached extravagant quips and cranks, at which he was laughing immensely, was not accustomed to being taken seriously: he was delighted with the trouble that Christopher was taking to discuss his nonsense, and even to understand it: and while he laughed, he was grateful for the importance which Christopher gave him: he thought him absurd and charming.

They parted very good friends: and Christopher was not a little surprised three hours later at rehearsal to see Mann-

heim's head poked through the little door leading to the orchestra, smiling and grimacing, and making mysterious signs at him. When the rehearsal was over Christopher went to him. Mannheim took his arm familiarly.

"You can spare a moment? . . . Listen. I have an idea. Perhaps you will think it absurd. . . . Would not you like for once in a way to write what you think of music and the musicos? Instead of wasting your breath in haranguing four dirty knaves of your band who are good for nothing but scraping and blowing into bits of wood, would it not be better to address the general public?"

"Not better? Would I like? . . . My word! And where do you want me to write? It *is* good of you! . . ."

"I've a proposal for you. . . . Some friends and I: Adalbert von Waldhaus, Raphael Goldenring, Adolf Mai, and Lucien Ehrenfeld—have started a review, the only intelligent review in the town: the *Dionysos*. (You must know it. . . .) We all admire each other, and should be glad if you would join us. Will you take over our musical criticism?"

Christopher was abashed by such an honour: he was longing to accept: he was only afraid of not being worthy: he could not write.

"Oh! come," said Mannheim, "I am sure you can. And besides, as soon as you are a critic you can do anything you like. You've no need to be afraid of the public. The public is incredibly stupid. It is nothing to be an artist; an artist is only a sort of comedian: an artist can be hissed. But a critic has the right to say: 'Hiss me that man!' The whole audience lets him do its thinking. Think whatever you like. Only look as if you were thinking something. Provided you give the fools their food, it does not much matter what, they will gulp down anything."

In the end Christopher consented, with effusive thanks. He only made it a condition that he should be allowed to say what he liked.

"Of course, of course", said Mannheim. "Absolute freedom! We are all free."

He looked him up at the theatre once more after the performance to introduce him to Adalbert von Waldhaus and his friends. They welcomed him warmly.

With the exception of Waldhaus, who belonged to one of the noble families of the neighbourhood, they were all Jews and all very rich: Mannheim was the son of a banker: Mai the son of the manager of a metallurgical establishment: and Ehrenfeld's father was a great jeweller. Their fathers belonged to the older generation of Jews, industrious and acquisitive, attached to the spirit of their race, building their fortunes with keen energy, and enjoying their energy much more than their fortunes. Their sons seemed to be made to destroy what their fathers had builded: they laughed at family prejudice and their ant-like mania for economy and business: they posed as artists, affected to despise money and to fling it out of the window. But in reality they hardly ever let it slip through their fingers: and in vain did they do all sorts of foolish things: they never could altogether lead astray their lucidity of mind and practical sense. For the rest, their parents kept an eye on them, and reined them in. The most prodigal of them, Mannheim, would sincerely have given away all that he had: but he never had anything: and although he was always loudly inveighing against his father's niggardliness, in his heart he laughed at it and thought that he was right. In fine, there was only Waldhaus who was really in control of his fortune, and went into it wholeheartedly and reckless of cost, and bore that of the Review. He was a poet. He wrote *Polymètres*, in the manner of Arno Holz and Walt Whitman, with lines alternately very long and very short, in which stops, double and triple stops, dashes, silences, commas, italics, and italics, played a great part. And so did alliteration and repetition —of a word—of a line—of a whole phrase. He interpolated words of every language. He wanted—(no one has ever known why)—to render *Cézanne* into verse. In truth, he was poetic enough and had a distinguished taste for stale things. He was sentimental and dry, naïve and foppish: his laboured verses affected a cavalier carelessness. He would have been a good poet for men of the world. But there are too many of the kind in the reviews and artistic circles: and he wished to be alone. He had taken it ino his head to play the great gentleman who is above the prejudices of his caste. He had more prejudices than anybody. He did not admit their existence. He took a delight in surrounding himself with Jews in the review which he edited, to rouse the indignation of his family, who were

very anti-Semitic, and to prove his own freedom of mind to himself. With his colleagues he assumed a tone of courteous equality. But in his heart he had a calm and boundless contempt for them. He was not unaware that they were very glad to make use of his name and money: and he let them do so because it pleased him to despise them.

And they despised him for letting them do so: for they knew very well that it served his turn. A fair exchange. Waldhaus lent them his name and fortune: and they brought him their talents, their eye for business and subscribers. They were much more intelligent than he. Not that they had more personality. They had perhaps even less. But in the little town they were, as the Jews are everywhere and always—by the mere fact of their difference of race which for centuries has isolated them and sharpened their faculty for observation—they were the most advanced in mind, the most sensible of the absurdity of its mouldy institutions and decrepit thought. Only, as their character was less free than their intelligence, it did not keep them, while they mocked, from trying to turn those institutions and ideas to account rather than to reform them. In spite of their independent professions of faith, they were like the noble Adalbert, little provincial snobs, rich, idle young men of family, who dabbled and flirted with letters for the fun of it. They were very glad to swagger about as giant-killers: but they were kindly enough, and never slew anybody but a few inoffensive people or those whom they thought could never harm them. They cared nothing for setting by the ears a society to which they knew very well they would one day return and embrace all the prejudices which they had combated. And when they did venture to make a stir or a little scandal, or loudly to declare war on some idol of the day—who was beginning to totter—they took care never to burn their boats: in case of danger they re-embarked. Whatever, then, might be the issue of the campaign—when it was finished it was a long time before war would break out again: the Philistines could sleep in peace. All that these new *Davidsbündler* wanted to do was to make it appear that they could have been terrible if they had so desired: but they did not desire. They preferred to be on friendly terms with artists and to give suppers to actresses.

Christopher was not happy in such a set. They were always

talking of women and horses: and their talk was not refined. They were stiff and formal. Adalbert spoke in a mincing, slow voice, with exaggerated, bored, and boring politeness. Adolf Mai, the secretary of the review, a heavy, thick-set, bull-necked, brutal-looking young man, always pretended to be in the right: he laid down the law, never listened to what anybody said, seemed to despise the opinion of the person he was talking to, and also that person. Goldenring, the art critic, who had a twitch, and eyes perpetually winking behind his large spectacles—no doubt in imitation of the painters whose society he cultivated, wore long hair, smoked in silence, mumbled scraps of sentences which he never finished, and made vague gestures in the air with his thumb. Ehrenfeld was little, bald, and smiling, had a fair beard and a sensitive, weary-looking face, a hooked nose, and he wrote the fashions and the society notes in the review. In a silky voice he used to talk obscurely: he had a wit, though of a malignant and often ignoble kind. All these young millionaires were anarchists, of course: when a man possesses everything it is the supreme luxury for him to deny society: for in that way he can evade his responsibilities. So might a robber, who has just fleeced a traveller, say to him: "What are you staying for? Get along! I have no more use for you."

Of the whole bunch, Christopher was only in sympathy with Mannheim: he was certainly the most lively of the five: he was amused by everything that he said and everything that was said to him: stuttering, stammering, blundering, sniggering, talking nonsense, he was incapable of following an argument, or of knowing exactly what he thought himself: but he was quite kindly, bearing no malice, having not a spark of ambition. In truth, he was not very frank: he was always playing a part: but quite innocently, and he never did anybody any harm.

He espoused all sorts of strange Utopias—most often generous. He was too subtle and too sceptical to lose his head even in his enthusiasm, and he never compromised himself by applying his theories. But he had to have some hobby: it was a game to him, and he was always changing from one to another. For the time being his craze was for kindness. It was not enough for him to be kind naturally: he wished to be thought kind: he professed kindness, and acted it. Out of reaction against the

hard, dry activity of his kinsfolk, and against German austerity, militarism, and Philistinism, he was a Tolstoyan, a Nirvanian, an evangelist, a Buddhist—he was not quite sure what—an apostle of a new morality that was soft, boneless, indulgent, placid, easy-living, effusively forgiving every sin, especially the sins of the flesh, a morality which did not conceal its predilection for those sins, and much less readily forgave the virtues—a morality which was only a compact of pleasure, a libertine association of mutual accomodations, which amused itself by donning the halo of sanctity. There was in it a spice of hypocrisy which was a little offensive to delicate palates, and would have even been frankly nauseating if it had taken itself seriously. But it made no pretensions towards that: it merely amused itself. His blackguardly Christianity was only meant to serve until some other hobby came along to take its place—no matter what: brute force, imperialism, "laughing lions." Mannheim was always playing a part, playing with his whole heart: he was trying on all the feelings that he did not possess before becoming a good Jew like the rest and with all the spirit of his race.

He was very sympathetic, and extremely irritating. For some time Christopher was one of his hobbies. Mannheim swore by him. He blew his trumpet everywhere. He dinned his praises into the ears of his family. According to him, Christopher was a genius, an extraordinary man, who made strange music and talked about it in an astonishing fashion, a witty man—and a handsome: fine lips, magnificent teeth. He added that Christopher admired him. One evening he took him home to dinner. Christopher found himself talking to his new friend's father, Lothair Mannheim, the banker, and Franz's sister, Judith.

It was the first time that he had been in a Jew's house. Although there were many Jews in the little town, and although they played an important part in its life by reason of their wealth, cohesion, and intelligence, they lived a little apart. There were always rooted prejudices in the minds of the people and a secret hostility that was credulous and injurious against them. Christopher's family shared these prejudices. His grandfather did not love Jews: but the irony of Fate had decreed that his best pupils should be of the race (one had become a

composer, the other a famous virtuoso): for there had been moments when he would have embraced these two good musicians: and then he would remember sadly that they had crucified the Lord: and he did not know how to reconcile his two incompatible currents of feeling. But in the end he did embrace them. He was inclined to think that the Lord would forgive them because of their love for music. Christopher's father, Melchior, who pretended to be broad-minded, had had fewer scruples about taking money from the Jews: and he even thought it good to do so: but he ridiculed them, and despised them. As for his mother, she was not sure that she was not committing a sin when she went to cook for them. Those whom she had had to do with were disdainful enough with her: but she had no grudge against them, she bore nobody any ill-will: she was filled with pity for these unhappy people whom God had damned: sometimes she would be filled with compassion when she saw the daughter of one of them go by or heard the merry laughter of their children.

"So pretty she is! . . . Such pretty children! . . . How dreadful! . . ." she would think.

She dared not say anything to Christopher, when he told her that he was going to dine with the Mannheims: but her heart sank. She thought that it was unnecessary to believe everything bad that was said about the Jews—people speak ill of everybody—and that there are honest people everywhere, but that it was better and more proper to keep themselves to themselves, the Jews on their side, the Christians on theirs.

Christopher shared none of these prejudices. In his perpetual reaction against his surroundings he was rather attracted towards the different race. But he hardly knew them. He had only come in contact with the more vulgar of the Jews: little shopkeepers, the populace swarming in certain streets between the Rhine and the cathedral, forming with the gregarious instinct of all human beings, a sort of little ghetto. He had often strolled through the neighbourhood, catching sight of and feeling a sort of sympathy with certain types of women with hollow cheeks, and full lips, and wide cheek-bones, a da Vinci smile, rather depraved, while their coarse language and shrill laughter destroyed the harmony that was in their faces when in repose. Even in the dregs of the people, in those large-headed, beady-eyed creatures with their bestial faces,

their thick-set, squat bodies, those degenerate descendants of the most noble of all peoples, even in that thick, fœtid muddiness, there were strange phosphorescent gleams, like will-o'-the-wisps dancing over a swamp: marvellous glances, minds subtle and brilliant, a subtle electricity emanating from the ooze which fascinated and disturbed Christopher. He thought that hidden deep were fine souls struggling, great hearts striving to break free from the dung: and he would have liked to meet them, and to aid them: without knowing them, he loved them, while he was a little fearful of them. And he had never had any opportunity of meeting the best of the Jews.

His dinner at the Mannheims' had for him the attraction of novelty and something of that of forbidden fruit. The Eve who gave him the fruit sweetened its flavour. From the first moment Christopher had eyes only for Judith Mannheim. She was utterly different from all the women he had known. Tall and slender, rather thin, though solidly built, with her face framed in her black hair, not long, but thick and curled low on her head, covering her temples and her broad, golden brow; rather short-sighted, with large pupils, and slightly prominent eyes: with a largish nose and wide nostrils, thin cheeks, a heavy chin, strong colouring, she had a fine profile showing much energy and alertness: full face, her expression was more changing, uncertain, complex: her eyes and her cheeks were irregular. She seemed to give revelation of a strong race, and in the mould of that race, roughly thrown together, were manifold incongruous elements, of doubtful and unequal quality, beautiful and vulgar at the same time. Her beauty lay especially in her silent lips, and in her eyes, in which there seemed to be greater depth by reason of their short-sightedness, and darker by reason of the bluish markings round them.

One needed to be more used than Christopher was to those eyes, which are more those of a race than of an individual, to be able to read through the limpidity that veiled them with such vivid quality, the real soul of the woman whom he thus encountered. It was the soul of the people of Israel that he saw in her sad and burning eyes, the soul that, unknown to them, shone forth from them. He lost himself as he gazed into them. It was only after some time that he was able, after losing his way again and again, to strike the track again on that oriental sea.

She looked at him: and nothing could disturb the clearness of her gaze: nothing in his Christian soul seemed to escape her. He felt that. Under the seduction of the woman's eyes upon him he was conscious of a virile desire, clear and cold, which stirred in him brutally, indescreetly. There was no evil in the brutality of it. She took possession of him: not like a coquette, whose desire is to seduce without caring whom she seduces. Had she been a coquette she would have gone to greatest lengths: but she knew her power, and she left it to her natural instinct to make use of it in its own way—especially when she had so easy a prey as Christopher. What interested her more was to know her adversary (any man, any stranger, was an adversary for her—an adversary with whom later on, if occasion served, she could sign a compact of alliance). She wished to know his quality. Life being a game, in which the cleverest wins, it was a matter of reading her opponent's cards and of not showing her own. When she succeeded she tasted the sweets of victory. It mattered little whether she could turn it to any account. It was purely for her pleasure. She had a passion for intelligence: not abstract intelligence, although she had brains enough, if she had liked, to have succeeded in any branch of knowledge, and would have made a much better successor to Lothair Mannheim, the banker, than her brother. But she preferred intelligence in the quick, the sort of intelligence which studies men. She loved to pierce through to the soul and to weigh its value—(she gave as scrupulous an attention to it as the Jewess of Matsys to the weighing of her gold)—with marvellous divination she could find the weak spot in the armour, the imperfections and foibles which are the key to the soul—she could lay her hands on its secrets: it was her way of feeling her sway over it. But she never dallied with her victory: she never did anything with her prize. Once her curiosity and her vanity were satisfied she lost her interest and passed on to another specimen. All her power was sterile. There was something of death in her living soul. She had the genius of curiosity and boredom.

And so she looked at Christopher and he looked at her. She hardly spoke. An imperceptible smile was enough, a little movement of the corners of her mouth: Christopher was hypnotised by her. Every now and then her smile would fade

away, her face would become cold, her eyes indifferent: she would attend to the meal or speak coldly to the servants: it was as though she were no longer listening. Then her eyes would light up again; and a few words coming pat would show that she had heard and understood everything.

She coldly examined her brother's judgement of Christopher: she knew Franz's crazes: her irony had had fine sport when she saw Christopher appear, whose looks and distinction had been vaunted by her brother (it seemed to her that Franz had a special gift for seeing facts as they are not: or perhaps he only thought it a paradoxical joke). But when she looked at Christopher more closely she recognised that what Franz had said was not altogether false: and as she went on with her scrutiny she discovered in Christopher a vague, unbalanced, though robust and bold power: that gave her pleasure, for she knew, better than any, the rarity of power. She was able to make Christopher talk about whatever she liked, and reveal his thoughts, and display the limitations and defects of his mind: she made him play the piano: she did not love music, but she understood it: and she saw Christopher's musical originality, although his music had roused no sort of emotion in her. Without the least change in the coldness of her manner, with a few short, apt and certainly not flattering remarks she showed her growing interest in Christopher.

Christopher saw it: and he was proud of it: for he felt the worth of such judgement and the rarity of her approbation. He made no secret of his desire to win it: and he set about it so naïvely as to make the three of them smile: he talked only to Judith and for Judith: he was as unconcerned with the others as though they did not exist.

Franz watched him as he talked: be followed his every word, with his lips and eyes, with a mixture of admiration and amusement: and he laughed aloud as he glanced at his father and his sister, who listened impassively and pretended not to notice him.

Lothair Mannheim—a tall old man, heavily built, stooping a little, red-faced, with grey hair standing straight up on end, very black moustache and eyebrows, a heavy though energetic and jovial face, which gave the impression of great vitality—had also studied Christopher during the first part of the dinner, slyly but good-naturedly: and he too had recognised at once

that there was "something" in the boy. But he was not interested in music or musicians: it was not in his line: he knew nothing about it, and made no secret of his ignorance: he even boasted of it (when a man of that sort confesses his ignorance of anything he does so to feed his vanity). As Christopher had clearly shown at once, with a rudeness in which there was no shade of malice, that he could without regret dispense with the society of the banker, and that the society of Fräulein Judith Mannheim would serve perfectly to fill his evening, old Lothair in some amusement had taken his seat by his fire: he read his paper, listening vaguely and ironically to Christopher's crotchets and his queer music, which sometimes made him laugh inwardly at the idea that there could be people who understood it and found pleasure in it. He did not trouble to follow the conversation: he relied on his daughter's cleverness to tell him exacty what the newcomer was worth. She discharged her duty conscientiously.

When Christopher had gone Lothair asked Judith:

"Well, you probed him enough: what do you think of the artist?"

She laughed, thought for a moment, reckoned up, and said:

"He is a little cracked: but he is not stupid."

"Good," said Lothair. "I thought so too. He will succeed, then?"

"Yes, I think so. He has power."

"Very good," said Lothair with the magnificent logic of the strong who are only interested in the strong, "we must help him."

Christopher went away filled with admiration for Judith Mannheim. He was not in love with her as Judith thought. They were both—she with her subtlety, he with his instinct which took the place of mind in him—mistaken about each other. Christopher was fascinated by the enigma and the intense activity of her mind: but he did not love her. His eyes and his intelligence were ensnared: his heart escaped. Why? It was difficult to tell. Because he had caught a glimpse of some doubtful, disturbing quality in her? In other circumstances that would have been a reason the more for loving: love is never stronger than when it goes out to one who will make it suffer. If Christopher did not love Judith it was not

the fault of either of them. The real reason, humiliating enough for both, was that he was still too near his last love. Experience had not made him wiser. But he had loved Ada so much, he had consumed so much faith, force, and illusion in that passion that there was not enough left for a new passion. Before another flame could be kindled he would have to build a new pyre in his heart: short of that there could only be a few flickerings, remnants of the conflagration that had escaped by chance, which asked only to be allowed to burn, cast a brief and brilliant light and then die down for want of fuel. Six months later, perhaps, he might have loved Judith blindly. Now he saw in her only a friend—a rather disturbing friend in truth—but he tried to drive his uneasiness back: it reminded him of Ada: there was no attraction in that memory: he preferred not to think of it. What attracted him in Judith was everything in her which was different from other women, not that which she had in common with them. She was the first intelligent woman he had met. She was intelligent from head to foot. Even her beauty—her gestures, her movements, her features, the fold of her lips, her eyes, her hands, her slender elegance—was the reflection of her intelligence: her body was moulded by her intelligence: without her intelligence she would have passed unnoticed: and no doubt she would even have been thought plain by most people. Her intelligence delighted Christopher. He thought it larger and more free than it was: he could not yet know how deceptive it was. He longed ardently to confide in her and to impart his ideas to her. He had never found anybody to take an interest in his dreams: he was turned in upon himself: what joy, then, to find a woman to be his friend! That he had not a sister had been one of the sorrows of his childhood: it seemed to him that a sister would have understood him more than a brother could have done. And when he met Judith he felt that childish and illusory hope of having a brotherly love spring up in him. Not being in love, love seemed to him a poor thing compared with friendship.

Judith felt this little shade of feeling, and was hurt by it. She was not in love with Christopher, and as she had excited other passions in other young men of the town, rich young men of better position, she could not feel any great satisfaction in knowing Christopher to be in love with her. But it

piqued her to know that he was not in love. No doubt she was pleased with him for confiding his plans: she was not surprised by it; but it was a little mortifying for her to know that she could only exercise an intellectual influence over him (an unreasoning influence is much more precious to a woman). She did not even exercise her influence: Christopher only courted her mind. Judith's intellect was imperious. She was used to moulding to her will the soft thoughts of the young men of her acquaintance. As she knew their mediocrity she found no pleasure in holding sway over them. With Christopher the pursuit was more interesting because more difficult. She was not interested in his projects: but she would have liked to direct his originality of thought, his ill-grown power, and to make them good—in her own way, of course, and not in Christopher's, which she did not take the trouble to understand. She saw at once that she could not succeed without a struggle: she had marked down in Christopher all sorts of notions and ideas which she thought childish and extravagant: they were weeds to her: she tried hard to eradicate them. She did not get rid of a single one. She did not gain the least satisfaction for her vanity. Christopher was intractable. Not being in love, he had no reason for surrendering his ideas to her.

She grew keen on the game, and instinctively tried for some time to overcome him. Christopher was very nearly taken in again in spite of his lucidity of mind at that time. Men are easily taken in by any flattery of their vanity or their desires: and an artist is twice as easy to trick as any other man because he has more imagination. Judith had only to draw Christopher into a dangerous flirtation to bowl him over once more more thoroughly than ever. But as usual she soon wearied of the game: she found that such a conquest was hardly worth while: Christopher was already boring her: she did not understand him.

She did not understand him beyond a certain point. Up to that she understood everything. Her admirable intelligence could not take her beyond it: she needed a heart, or in default of that the thing which could give the illusion of one for a time: love. She understood Christopher's criticism of people, and things: it amused her, and seemed to her true enough: she had thought much the same herself. But what she did not understand was that such ideas might have an influence on

practical life when it might be dangerous or awkward to apply them. The attitude of revolt against everybody and everything which Christopher had taken up led to nothing: he could not imagine that he was going to reform the world.... And then?... It was waste of time to knock one's head against a wall. A clever man judges men, laughs at them in secret, despises them a little: but he does as they do—only a little better: it is the only way of mastering them. Thought is one world: action is another. What use is it for a man to be the victim of his thoughts? Since men are so stupid as not to be able to bear the truth, why force it on them? To accept their weakness, to seem to bow to it, and to feel free to despise them in his heart, is there not a secret joy in that? They joy of a clever slave? Certainly. But all the world is a slave: there is no getting away from that: it is useless to protest against it: better to be a slave deliberately of one's own free will and to avoid ridiculous and futile conflict. Besides, the worst slavery of all is to be the slave of one's own thoughts and to sacrifice everything to them. There is no need to deceive one's self. She saw clearly that if Christopher went on, as he seemed determined to do, with his aggressive refusal to compromise with the prejudices of German art and German mind, he would turn everybody against him, even his patrons: he was courting inevitable ruin. She did not understand why he so obstinately held out against himself, and so took pleasure in digging his own ruin.

To have understood him she would have had to be able to understand that his aim was not success, but his own faith. He believed in art: he believed in *his* art: he believed in himself, as realities not only superior to interest, but also to his own life. When he was a little out of patience with her remarks and told her so in his naïve arrogance, she just shrugged her shoulders: she did not take him seriously. She thought he was using big words such as she was accustomed to hearing from her brother when he announced periodically his absurd and ridiculous resolutions, which he never by any chance put into practice. And then when she saw that Christopher really believed in what he said, she thought him mad, and lost interest in him.

After that she took no trouble to appear to advantage, and she showed herself as she was: much more German, and average

German, than she seemed to be at first, more, perhaps, than she thought. The Jews are quite erroneously reproached with not belonging to any nation, and with forming from one end of Europe to the other a homogeneous people impervious to the influence of the different races with which they have pitched their tents. In reality there is no race which more easily takes on the impress of the country through which it passes: and if there are many characteristics in common between a French Jew and a German Jew, there are many more different characteristics derived from their new country, of which, with incredible rapidity, they assimilate the habits of mind: more the habits than the mind, indeed. But habit, which is a second nature to all men, is in most of them all the nature that they have, and the result is that the majority of the original citizens of any country have very little right to reproach the Jews with the lack of a profound and reasonable national feeling of which they themselves possess nothing at all.

The women, always more sensible to external influences, more easily adaptable to the conditions of life and to change with them—Jewish women throughout Europe assume the physical and moral customs, often exaggerating them, of the country in which they live, without losing the shadow and the strange fluid, insistent, haunting quality of their race. This idea came to Christopher. At the Mannheims' he met Judith's aunts, cousins, and friends. Though there was little of the German in their eyes, ardent and too close together, their noses going down to their lips, their strong features, their red blood coursing under their coarse brown skins: though almost all of them seemed hardly at all fashioned to be German—they were all extraordinarily German: they had the same way of talking, of dressing, of overdressing. Judith was much the best of them all: and comparison with them made all that was exceptional in her intelligence, all that she had made of herself, shine forth. But she had most of their faults just as much as they. She was much more free than they morally—almost absolutely free—but socially she was no more free: or at least her practical sense usurped the place of her freedom of mind. She believed in society, in class, in prejudice, because when all was told she found them to her advantage. It was idle for her to laugh at the German spirit: she followed it like any German. Her intelligence made her see the mediocrity of some

artist of reputation: but she respected him none the less because of his reputation: and if she met him personally she would admire him: for her vanity was flattered. She had no love for the works of Brahms, and she suspected him of being an artist of the second rank: but his fame impressed her: and as she had received five or six letters from him the result was that she thought him the greatest musician of the day. She had no doubt as to Christopher's real worth, or as to the stupidity of Lieutenant Detlev von Fleischer: but she was more flattered by the homage the lieutenant deigned to pay to her millions than by Christopher's friendship: for a dull officer is a man of another caste: it is more difficult for a German Jewess to enter that caste than for any other woman. Although she was not deceived by these feudal follies, and although she knew quite well that if she did marry Lieutenant Detlev von Fleischer she would be doing him a great honour, she set herself to the conquest: she stooped so low as to make eyes at the fool and to flatter his vanity. The proud Jewess, who had a thousand reasons for her pride—the clever, disdainful daughter of Mannheim the banker lowered herself, and acted like any of the little middle-class German women whom she despised.

That experience was short. Christopher lost his illusions about Judith as quickly as he had found them. It is only just to say that Judith did nothing to preserve them. As soon as a woman of that stamp has judged a man she is done with him: he ceases to exist for her: she will not see him again. And she no more hesitates to reveal her soul to him, with calm impudence, than to appear naked before her dog, her cat, or any other domestic animal. Christopher saw Judith's egotism and coldness, and the mediocrity of her character. He had not had time to be absolutely caught. But he had been enough caught to make him suffer and to bring him to a sort of fever. He did not so much love Judith as what she might have been—what she ought to have been. Her fine eyes exercised a melancholy fascination over him: he could not forget them: although he knew now the drab soul that slumbered in their depths he went on seeing them as he wished to see them, as he had first seen them. It was one of those loveless hallucinations of love which take up so much of the hearts of artists when they are not entirely absorbed by their work. A passing face is enough

to create it: they see in it all the beauty that is in it, unknown to its indifferent possessor. And they love it the more for its indifference. They love it as a beautiful thing that must die without any man having known its worth or that it even had life.

Perhaps he was deceiving himself, and Judith Mannheim could not have been anything more than she was. But for a moment Christopher had believed in her: and her charm endured: he could not judge her impartially. All her beauty seemed to him to be hers, to be herself. All that was vulgar in her he cast back upon her twofold race, Jew and German, and perhaps he was more indignant with the German than with the Jew, for it had made him suffer more. As he did not yet know any other nation, the German spirit was for him a sort of scapegoat: he put upon it all the sins of the world. That Judith had deceived him was a reason the more for combating it: he could not forgive it for having crushed the life out of such a soul.

Such was his first encounter with Israel. He had hoped much from it. He had hoped to find in that strong race living apart from the rest an ally for his fight. He lost that hope. With the flexibility of his passionate intuition, which made him leap from one extreme to another, he persuaded himself that the Jewish race was much weaker than it was said to be, and much more open—much too open—to outside influence. It had all its own weaknesses augmented by those of the rest of the world picked up on its way. It was not in them that he could find assistance in working the lever of his art. Rather he was in danger of being swallowed with them in the sands of the desert.

Having seen the danger, and not feeling sure enough of himself to brave it, he suddenly gave up going to the Mannheims'. He was invited several times, and begged to be excused, without giving any reason. As up till then he had shown an excessive eagerness to accept, such a sudden change was remarked: it was attributed to his "originality": but the Mannheims had no doubt that the fair Judith had something to do with it: Lothair and Franz joked about it at dinner. Judith shrugged her shoulders and said it was a fine conquest, and she asked her brother frigidly not to make such a fuss about it. But she left no stone unturned in her effort to bring Christopher back. She wrote to him for some musical informa-

tion which no one else could supply: and at the end of her letter she made a friendly allusion to the rarity of his visits and the pleasure it would give them to see him. Christopher replied, giving the desired information, said that he was very busy, and did not go. They met sometimes at the theatre. Christopher obstinately looked away from the Mannheims' box: and he would pretend not to see Judith, who held herself in readiness to give him her most charming smile. She did not persist. As she did not count on him for anything, she was annoyed that the little artist should let her do all the labour of their friendship, and pure waste at that. If he wanted to come, he could. If not—oh, well, they could do without him. . . .

They did without him: and his absence left no very great gap in the Mannheims' evenings. But in spite of herself Judith was really annoyed with Christopher. It seemed natural enough not to bother about him when he was there: and she could allow him to show his displeasure at being neglected: but that his displeasure should go so far as to break off their relationship altogether seemed to her to show a stupid pride and a heart more egotistic than in love. Judith could not tolerate her own faults in others.

She followed the more attentively everything that Christopher did and wrote. Without seeming to do so, she would lead her brother to the subject of Christopher: she would make him tell her of his intercourse with him: and she would punctuate the narrative with clever ironic comment, which never let any ridiculous feature escape, and gradually destroyed Franz's enthusiasm without his knowing it.

At first all went well with the Review. Christopher had not yet perceived the mediocrity of his colleagues: and, since he was one of them, they hailed him as a genius. Mannheim, who had discovered him, went everywhere repeating that Christopher was an admirable critic, though he had never read anything he had written, that he had mistaken his vocation, and that he, Mannheim, had revealed it to him. They advertised his articles in mysterious terms which aroused curiosity: and his first effort was in fact like a stone falling into a duck-pond in the atony of the little town. It was called: *Too much Music.*

"Too much music, too much drinking, too much eating," wrote Christopher. "Eating, drinking, hearing, without hun-

ger, thirst, or need, from sheer habitual gormandising. Living like Strasbourg geese. These people are sick of a diseased appetite. It matters little what you give them: *Tristan* or the *Trompeter von Säkkingen,* Beethoven or Mascagni, a fugue or a two-step, Adam, Bach, Puccini, Mozart or Marschner: they do not know what they are eating: the great thing is to eat. They find no pleasure in it. Look at them at a concert. Talk of German gaiety! These people do not know what gaiety means: they are always gay! Their gaiety, like their sorrow, drops like rain: their joy is dust: there is neither life nor force in it. They would stay for hours smilingly and vaguely drinking in sounds, sounds, sounds. They think of nothing: they feel nothing: they are sponges. True joy, or true sorrow—strength—is not drawn out over hours like beer from a cask. They take you by the throat and have you down: after they are gone there is no desire left in a man to drink in anything: he is full! . . .

"Too much music! You are slaying each other and it. If you choose to murder each other that is your affair: I can't help it. But where music is concerned—hands off! I will not suffer you to debase the loveliness of the world by heaping up in the same basket things holy and things shameful, by giving, as you do at present, the prelude to *Parsifal* between a fantasia on the *Daughter of the Regiment* and a saxophone quartette, or an adagio of Beethoven between a cakewalk and the rubbish of Leoncavallo. You boast of being of being a musical people. You pretend to love music. What sort of music do you love? Good or bad? You applaud both equally. Well, then, choose! What exactly do you want? You no not know yourselves. You do not want to know: you are too fearful of taking sides and compromising yourselves. . . . To the devil with your prudence! You are above party, do you say? Above? You mean below. . . ."

And he quoted the lines of old Gottfried Keller, the honest citizen of Zurich—one of the German writers who was most dear to him by reason of his vigorous loyalty and his keen savour of the soil:

"Wer über den Partein sich wähnt mit stolzen Mienen
Der steht zumeist vielmehr beträchtlich unter ihnen."

("He who proudly preens himself on being above parties is rather immeasurably beneath them.")

"Have courage and be true," he went on. "Have courage and be ugly. If you like bad music, then say so frankly. Show yourselves, see yourselves as you are. Rid your souls of the loathsome burden of all your compromise and equivocation. Wash it in pure water. How long is it since you have seen yourselves in a mirror? I will show you yourselves. Composers, virtuosi, conductors, singers, and you, dear public. You shall for once know yourselves.... Be what you like: but, for Heaven's sake, be true! Be true even though art and artists—and I myself—have to suffer for it! If art and truth cannot live together, then let art disappear. Truth is life. Lies are death."

Naturally, this youthful, wild outburst, which was all of a piece, and in very bad taste, produced an outcry. And yet, as everybody was attacked and nobody in particular, its pertinency was not recognised. Everyone is, or believes himself to be, or says that he is, the best friend of truth: there was, therefore, no danger of the conclusions of the article being attacked. Only people were shocked by its general tone: everybody agreed that it was hardly proper, especially from an artist in a semi-official position. A few musicians began to be uneasy, and protested bitterly: they saw that Christopher would not stop at that. Others thought themselves more clever and congratulated Christopher on his courage: they were no less uneasy about his next articles.

Both tactics produced the same result. Christopher had plunged: nothing could stop him: and as he had promised, everybody was passed in survey, composers and interpreters alike.

The first victims were the *Kapellmeisters*. Christopher did not confine himself to general remarks on the art of conducting an orchestra. He mentioned his colleagues of his own town and the neighbouring towns by name: or if he did not name them, his allusions were so transparent that nobody could be mistaken. Everybody recognised the apathetic conductor of the Court, Alois von Werner, a cautious old man, laden with honours, who was afraid of everything, dodged everything, was too timid to make a remark to his musicians, and meekly followed whatever they chose to do—who never risked anything on his programme that had not been consecrated by twenty years of success, or, at least, guaranteed by the official

stamp of some academic dignity. Christopher ironically applauded his boldness: he congratulated him on having discovered Gade, Dvorak, or Tchaikovsky: he waxed enthusiastic over his unfailing correctness, his metronomic equality, the always *fain-nuanciert* (finely shaded) playing of his orchestra: he proposed to orchestrate the *École de la Vélocité* of Czerny for his next concert, and implored him not to try himself so much, not to give rein to his passions, to look after his precious health. Or he cried out indignantly at the way in which he had conducted the *Eroica* of Beethoven:

"A cannon! A cannon! Mow me down these people! ... But have you then no idea of the conflict, the fight between human stupidity and human ferocity—and the strength which tramples them underfoot with a glad shout of laughter? How could you know it? It is you against whom it fights! You expend all the heroism that is in you in listening to or in playing the *Eroica* of Beethoven without a yawn (for it bores you.... Confess that it bores you to death!) or in risking a draught as you stand with bare head and bowed back to let some Serene Highness pass."

He could not be sarcastic enough about the pontiffs of the Conservatoires who interpreted the great men of the past as "classics".

"Classical! That word expresses everything. Free passion, arranged and expurgated for the use of schools! Life, that cast plain swept by the winds, enclosed within the four walls of a school playground! The fierce, proud beat of a heart in anguish, reduced to the tick-tack of a four-time pendulum, which goes its jolly way, hobbling and imperturbably leaning on the crutch of time! ... To enjoy the Ocean you need to put it in a bowl with goldfish. You only understand life when you have killed it."

If he was not kind to the "bird-stuffers", as he called them, he was even less kind to the ringmen of the orchestra, the illustrious *Kapellmeisters* who toured the country to show off their flourishes and their dainty hands, those who exercised their virtuosity at the expense of the masters, tried hard to make the most familiar works unrecognisable, and turned somersaults through the hoop of the *Symphony in C minor*. He made them appear as old coquettes, *prima donnas* of the orchestra, gipsies, and rope-dancers.

The virtuosi naturally provided him with splendid material. He declared himself incompetent when he had to criticise their conjuring performances. He said that such mechanical exercises belonged to the School of Arts and Crafts, and that no musical criticism but charts registering the duration, and number of the notes, and the energy expended, could decide the merit of such labours. Sometimes he would set at naught some famous piano virtuoso who during a two hours' concert had surmounted the formidable difficulties—with a smile on his lips and his hair hanging down into his eyes—of executing a childish *andante* of Mozart. He did not ignore the pleasure of overcoming difficulties. He had tasted it himself: it was one of the joys of life to him. But only to see the most material aspect of it, and to reduce all the heroism of art to that, seemed to him grotesque and degrading. He could not forgive the "lions" or "panthers" of the piano. But he was not very indulgent either towards the town pedants, famous in Germany, who, while they are rightly anxious not to alter the text of the masters, carefully suppress every flight of thought, and, like E. d'Albert and H. von Bülow, seem to be giving a lesson in diction when they are rendering a passionate sonata.

The singers had their turn. Christopher was full to the brim of things to say about their barbarous heaviness and their provincial affectations. It was not only because of his recent misadventures with the lady in blue, but because of all the torture he had suffered during so many performances. It was difficult to know which had suffered most, ears or eyes. And Christopher had not enough standards of comparison to be able to have any idea of the ugliness of the setting, the hideous costumes, the screaming colours. He was only shocked by the vulgarity of the people, their gestures and attitudes, their unnatural playing, the inability of the actors to take on other souls than their own, and by the stupefying indifference with which they passed from one rôle to another, provided they were written more or less in the same register. Matrons of opulent flesh, hearty and buxom, appeared alternately as Isolde and Carmen. Amfortas played Figaro. But what most offended Christopher was the ugliness of the singing, especially in the classical works in which the beauty of melody is essential. No one in Germany could sing the perfect music of the eighteenth century: no one would take the trouble. The

clear, pure style of Glück and Mozart which, like that of Goethe, seems to be bathed in the light of Italy—the style which begins to change and to become vibrant and dazzling with Weber—the style ridiculed by the ponderous caricatures of the author of *Crociato*—had been killed by the triumph of Wagner. The wild flight of the Valkyries with their strident cries had passed over the Grecian sky. The heavy clouds of Odin dimmed the light. No one now thought of singing music: they sang poems. Ugliness and carelessness of detail, even false notes, were let pass under pretext that only the whole, only the thought behind it mattered. . . .

"Thought! Let us talk of that. As if you understood it! . . . But whether or no you do understand it, I pray you respect the form that thought has chosen for itself. Above all, let music be and remain music!"

And the great concern of German artists with expression and profundity of thought was, according to Christopher, a good joke. Expression? Thought? Yes, they introduced them into everything—everything impartially. They would have found thought in a skein of wool just as much—neither more nor less—as in a statue of Michelangelo. They played anything, anybody's music with exactly the same energy. For most of them the great thing in music—so he declared—was the volume of sound, just a musical noise. The pleasure of singing, so potent in Germany, was in some sort a pleasure of vocal gymnastics. It was just a matter of being inflated with air and then letting it go vigorously, powerfully, for a long time together and rhythmically. And by way of compliment he accorded a certain great singer a certificate of good health. He was not content with flaying the artists. He strode over the footlights and trounced the public for coming, gaping, to such performances. The public was staggered, and did not know whether it ought to laugh or be angry. They had every right to cry out upon his injustice: they had taken care not to be mixed up in any artistic conflict: they stood aside prudently from any burning question: and to avoid making any mistake, they applauded everything! And now Christopher declared that it was a crime to applaud! . . . To applaud bad works? That would have been enough! But Christopher went further: he stormed at them for applauding great works.

"Humbugs!" he said. "You would have us believe that you

have as much enthusiasm as that? . . . Oh! Come! Spare yourselves the trouble! You only prove exactly the opposite of what you are trying to prove. Applaud, if you like, those works and passages which in some measure deserve applause. Applaud those loud final movements which are written, as Mozart said, 'for long ears'. Applaud as much as you like, then: your braying is anticipated: it is part of the concert. But after the *Missa Solemnis* of Beethoven! . . . Poor wretches! . . . It is the Last Judgment. You have just seen the maddening *Gloria* pass like a storm over the ocean. You have seen the water-spout of an athletic and tremendous will, which stops, breaks, reaches up to the clouds, clinging by its two hands above the abyss, then plunging once more into space in full swing. The squall shrieks and whirls along. And when the hurricane is at its height there is a sudden modulation, a radiance of sound which cleaves the darkness of the sky, and falls upon the livid sea like a patch of light. It is the end: the furious flight of the destroying angel stops short, its wings transfixed by these flashes of lightning. Around you all is buzzing and quivering. The eye gazes fixedly forward in stupor. The heart beats, breathing stops, the limbs are paralysed. . . . And hardly has the last note sounded than already you are gay and merry. You shout, you laugh, you criticise, you applaud. . . . But you have seen nothing, heard nothing, felt nothing, understood nothing, nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing! The sufferings of an artist are a show to you. You think the tears of agony of a Beethoven are finely painted. You would cry 'Encore' to the Crucifixion. A great soul struggles all its life long in sorrow to divert your idleness for an hour! . . ."

So, without knowing it, he confirmed Goethe's great words: but he had not yet attained his lofty serenity:

"The people make a sport of the sublime. If they could see it as it is, they would be unable to bear its aspect."

If he had only stopped at that! But, whirled along by his enthusiasm, he swept past the public and plunged like a cannonball into the sanctuary, the tabernacle, the inviolable refuge of mediocrity: criticism. He bombarded his colleagues. One of them had taken upon himself to attack the most gifted of living composers, the most advanced representative of the new school, Hassler, the writer of programme symphonies,

extravagant in truth, but full of genius. Christopher, who—as perhaps will be remembered—had been presented to him when he was a child, had always had a secret tenderness for him in his gratitude for the enthusiasm and emotion that he had had then. To see a stupid critic, whose ignorance he knew, instructing a man of that calibre, calling him to order, and reminding him of set principles, infuriated him:

"Order! Order!" he cried. "You do not know any order but that of the police. Genius is not to be dragged along the beaten track. It creates order, and makes its will a law."

After this arrogant declaration he took the unlucky critic, considered all the idiocies he had written for some time past, and administered correction.

All the critics felt the affront. Up to that time they had stood aside from the conflict. They did not care to risk a rebuff: they knew Christopher, they knew his efficiency, and they knew also that he was not long-suffering. Certain of them had discreetly expressed their regret that so gifted a composer should dabble in a profession not his own. Whatever might be their opinion (when they had one), and however hurt they might be by Christopher, they respected in him their own privilege of being able to criticise everything without being criticised themselves. But when they saw Christopher rudely break the tacit convention which bound them, they saw in him an enemy of public order. With one consent it seemed revolting to them that a very young man should take it upon himself to show scant respect for the national glories: and they began a furious campaign against him. They did not write long articles or consecutive arguments (they were unwilling to venture upon such ground with an adversary better armed than themselves: although a journalist has the special faculty of being able to discuss without taking his adversary's arguments into consideration, and even without having read them) but long experience had taught them that, as the reader of a paper always agrees with it, even to appear to argue was to weaken its credit with him: it was necessary to affirm, or, better still, to deny (negation is twice as powerful as affirmation: it is a direct consequence of the law of gravity: it is much easier to drop a stone than to throw it up.) They adopted, therefore, a system of little notes, perfidious, ironic, injurious, which were repeated day by day, in an easily ac-

cessible position, with unwearying assiduity. They held the insolent Christopher up to ridicule, though they never mentioned him by name, but always transparently alluded to him. They twisted his words to make them look absurd: they told anecdotes about him, true for the most part, though the rest were a tissue of lies, nicely calculated to set him at loggerheads with the whole town, and, worse still, with the Court: even his physical appearance, his features, his manner of dressing, were attacked and caricatured in a way that by dint of repetition came to be like him.

It would have mattered little to Christopher's friends if their *Review* had not also come in for blows in the battle. In truth, it served rather as an advertisement: there was no desire to commit the *Review* to the quarrel: rather the attempt was made to cut Christopher off from it: there was astonishment that it should so compromise its good name, and they were given to understand that if they did not take care steps would be taken, however unpleasant it might be, to make the whole editorial staff responsible. There were signs of attack, gentle enough, upon Adolf Mai and Mannheim, which stirred up the wasps' nest. Mannheim only laughed at it: he thought that it would infuriate his father, his uncles, cousins, and his innumerable family, who took upon themselves to watch everything he did and to be scandalised by it. But Adolf Mai took it very seriously, and blamed Christopher for compromising the *Review*. Christopher sent him packing. The others who had not been attacked found it rather amusing that Mai, who was apt to pontificate over them, should be their scapegoat. Waldhaus was secretly delighted: he said that there was never a fight without a few heads being broken. Naturally he took good care that it should not be his own: he thought he was sheltered from onslaught by the position of his family and his relatives: and he saw no harm in the Jews, his allies, being mauled a little. Ehrenfeld and Goldenring, who were so far untouched, would not have been worried by attack: they could reply. But what did touch them on the raw was that Christopher should go on persistently putting them in the wrong with their friends, and especially their women friends. They had laughed loudly at the first articles, and thought them good fun: they admired Christopher's vigorous window-smashing: they thought they

had only to give the word to check his combativeness, or at least to turn his attack from men and women whom they might mention. But no. Christopher would listen to nothing: he paid no heed to any remark, and went on like a madman. If they let him go on there would be no living in the place. Already their young women friends, furious and in tears, had come and made scenes at the offices of the *Review*. They brought all their diplomacy to bear on Christopher to persuade him at least to moderate certain of his criticisms: Christopher changed nothing. They lost their tempers: Christopher lost his, but he changed nothing. Waldhaus was amused by the unhappiness of his friends, which in no wise touched him, and took Christopher's part to annoy them. Perhaps also he was more capable than they of appreciating Christopher's extravagance, who with head down hurled himself upon everything without keeping any line of retreat, or preparing any refuge for the future. As for Mannheim, he was royally amused by the farce: it seemed to him a good joke to have introduced this madman among these correct people, and he rocked with laughter both at the blows which Christopher dealt and at those which he received. Although, under his sister's influence, he was beginning to think that Christopher was decidedly a little cracked, he only liked him the more for it (it was necessary for him to find those who were in sympathy with him a little absurd). And so he joined Waldhaus in supporting Christopher against the others.

As he was not wanting in practical sense, in spite of all his efforts to pretend to the contrary, he thought very justly that it would be to his friend's advantage to ally himself with the cause of the most advanced musical party in the country.

As in most German towns, there was in the town a *Wagner-Verein*, which represented new ideas against the conservative element. In truth, there was no great risk in defending Wagner when his fame was acknowledged everywhere and his works included in the repertoire of every Opera House in Germany. And yet his victory was rather won by force than by universal accord, and at heart the majority were obstinately conservative, especially in the small towns such as this which have been rather left outside the great modern movements, and are rather proud of their ancient fame. More than anywhere else there reigned the distrust, so innate in the German

people, of anything new, the sort of laziness in feeling anything true or powerful which has not been pondered and digested by several generations. It was apparent in the reluctance with which—if not the works of Wagner, which are beyond discussion—every new work inspired by the Wagnerian spirit was accepted. And so the *Wagner-Verein* would have had a useful task to fulfil if they had set themselves to defend all the young and original forces in art. Sometimes they did so, and Bruckner or Hugo Wolf found in some of them their best allies. But too often the egotism of the master weighed upon his disciples: and just as Bayreuth serves only monstrously to glorify one man, the *offshoots* of Bayreuth were little churches in which Mass was eternally sung in honour of the one God. At the most the faithful disciples were admitted to the side chapels, the disciples who applied the hallowed doctrines to the letter, and, prostrate in the dust, adored the only Divinity with His many faces: music, poetry, drama, and metaphysics.

The *Wagner-Verein* of the town was in exactly this case. However, they went through the form of activity: they were always trying to enrol young men of talent who looked as though they might be useful to it: and they had long had their eyes on Christopher. They had discreetly made advances to him, of which Christopher had not taken any notice, because he felt no need of being associated with anybody: he could not understand the necessity which drove his compatriots always to be banding themselves together in groups, being unable to do anything alone: neither to sing, nor to walk, nor to drink. He was averse to all *Vereinswesen*. But on the whole he was more kindly disposed to the *Wagner-Verein* than to any other *Verein:* at least, they did provide an excuse for fine concerts: and although he did not share all the Wagnerian ideas on art, he was much nearer them than to those of any other group in music. He could, he thought, find common ground with a party which was as unjust as himself towards Brahms and the Brahms-lovers. So he let himself be put up for it. Mannheim introduced him: he knew everybody. Without being a musician, he was a member of the *Wagner-Verein*. The managing committee had followed the campaign which Christopher was conducting in the *Review*. His slaughter in the opposing camp had seemed to them to give signs of a strong

grip which it would be as well to have in their service. Christopher had also let fly certain disrespectful remarks about the sacred fetish: but they had preferred to close their eyes to that: and perhaps his attacks, not yet very offensive, had not been without their influence, unconsciously, in making them so eager to enrol Christopher before he had time to deliver himself more fully. They came and very amiably asked his permission to play some of his compositions at one of the approaching concerts of the Society. Christopher was flattered, and accepted: he went to the *Wagner-Verein*, and, urged by Mannheim, he was made a member.

At that time there were at the head of the *Wagner-Verein* two men, of whom one enjoyed a certain notoriety as a writer, and the other as a conductor. Both had a Mohammedan belief in Wagner. The first, Josias Kling, had compiled a Wagner Dictionary—*Wagner Lexikon*—which made it possible in a moment to know the master's thoughts *de omni re scibili:* it had been his life's work. He was capable of reciting whole chapters of it at table, as the French provincials used to troll the songs of the Maid. He used also to publish in the *Bayreuther Blätter* articles on Wagner and the Aryan Spirit. Of course, Wagner was to him the type of the pure Aryan, of whom the German race had remained the last inviolable refuge against the corrupting influences of Latin Semitism, especially the French. He declared that the impure French spirit was finally destroyed, though he did not desist from attacking it bitterly day by day as though the eternal enemy were still a menace. He would only acknowledge one great man in France: the Count of Gobineau. Kling was a little man, very little, and he used to blush like a girl. The other pillar of the *Wagner-Verein,* Erich Lauber, had been manager of a chemical works until four years before: then he had given up everything to become a conductor. He had succeeded by force of will, and because he was very rich. He was a Bayreuth fanatic: it was said that he had gone there on foot, from Munich, wearing pilgrim's sandals. It was a strange thing that a man who had read much, travelled much, practised divers professions, and in everything displayed an energetic personality, should have become in music a sheep of Panurge: all his originality was expended in his being a little more stupid than the others. He was not sure enough of himself in music

to trust to his own personal feelings, and so he slavishly followed the interpretations of Wagner given by the *Kapellmeisters,* and the licensees of Bayreuth. He desired to reproduce even to the smallest detail the setting and the variegated costumes which delighted the puerile and barbarous taste of the little Court of Wahnfried. He was like the fanatical admirer of Michelangelo who used to reproduce in his copies even the cracks in the wall of the mouldy patches which had themselves been hallowed by their appearance in the hallowed pictures.

Christopher was not likely to approve greatly of the two men. But they were men of the world, pleasant, and both well-read: and Lauber's conversation was always interesting on any other subject than music. He was a bit of a crank: and Christopher did not dislike cranks: they were a change from the horrible banality of reasonable people. He did not yet know that there is nothing more devastating than an irrational man, and that originality is even more rare among those who are called "originals" than among the rest. For these "originals" are simply maniacs whose thoughts are reduced to clockwork.

Josias Kling and Lauber, being desirous of winning Christopher's support, were at first very keenly interested in him. Kling wrote a eulogistic article about him and Lauber followed all his directions when he conducted his compositions at one of the concerts of the Society. Christopher was touched by it all. Unfortunately all their attentions were spoiled by the stupidity of those who paid them. He had not the faculty of pretending about people because they admired him. He was exacting. He demanded that no one should admire him for the opposite of what he was: and he was always prone to regard as enemies those who were his friends, by mistake. And so he was not at all pleased with Kling for seeing in him a disciple of Wagner, and trying to see connections between passages of his *Lieder* and passages of the *Tetralogy,* which had nothing in common but certain notes of the scale. And he had no pleasure in hearing one of his works sandwiched—together with a worthless imitation by a Wagnerian student—between two enormous blocks of Wagnerian drama.

It was not long before he was stifled in the little chapel. It was just another Conservatoire, as narrow as the old Con-

servatoires, and more intolerant because it was the latest comer in art. Christopher began to lose his illusions about the absolute value of a form of art or of thought. Hitherto he had always believed that great ideas bear their own light within themselves. Now he saw that ideas may change, but that men remain the same: and, finally, nothing counted but men: their ideas were what they were. If they were born mediocre and servile, even genius became mediocre in its passage through their souls, and the shout of freedom of the hero breaking his bonds became the act of slavery of succeeding generations. Christopher could not refrain from expressing his feelings. He let no opportunity slip of jeering at fetishism in art. He declared that there was no need of idols, or classics of any sort, and that he only had the right to call himself the heir of the spirit of Wagner who was capable of trampling Wagner underfoot and so walking on and keeping himself in close communion with life. Kling's stupidity made Christopher aggressive. He set out all the faults and absurdities he could see in Wagner. The Wagnerians at once credited him with a grotesque jealousy of their God. Christopher for his part had no doubt that these same people who exalted Wagner since he was dead would have been the first to strangle him in his life: and he did them an injustice. The Klings and the Laubers also had had their hour of illumination: they had been advanced twenty years ago: and then, like most people, they had stopped short at that. Man has so little force that he is out of breath after the first ascent: very few are long-winded enough to go on.

Christopher's attitude quickly alienated him from his new friends. Their sympathy was a bargain: he had to side with them if they were to side with him: and it was quite evident that Christopher would not yield an inch: he would not join them. They lost their enthusiasm for him. The eulogies which he refused to accord to the gods and demi-gods who were approved by the cult, were withheld from him. They showed less eagerness to welcome his compositions: and some of the members began to protest against his name being too often on the programmes. They laughed at him behind his back, and criticism went on: Kling and Lauber by not protesting seemed to take part in it. They would have avoided a breach with Christopher if possible: first because the minds of the Ger-

mans of the Rhine like mixed solutions, solutions which are not solutions, and have the privilege of prolonging indefinitely an ambiguous situation: and, secondly, because they hoped in spite of everything to be able to make use of him, by wearing him down, if not by persuasion.

Christopher gave them no time for it. Whenever he thought he felt that at heart any man disliked him, but would not admit it and tried to cover it up so as to remain on good terms with him, he would never rest until he had succeeded in proving to him that he was his enemy. One evening at the *Wagner-Verein* when he had come up against a wall of hypocritical hostility, he could bear it no longer, and sent in his resignation to Lauber, without wasting words. Lauber could not understand it: and Mannheim hastened to Christopher to try and pacify him. At his first words Christopher burst out:

"No, no, no—no! Don't talk to me about these people. I will not see them again.... I cannot. I cannot.... I am disgusted, horribly, with men: I can hardly bear to look at one."

Mannheim laughed heartily. He was thinking much less of smoothing Christopher down than of having the fun of it.

"I know that they are not beautiful," he said; "but that is nothing new: what new thing has happened?"

"Nothing. I have had enough, that is all.... Yes, laugh, laugh at me: everybody knows I am mad. Prudent people act in accordance with the laws of logic and reason and sanity. I am not like that: I am a man who acts only on his own impulse. When a certain quantity of electricity is accumulated in me it has to expend itself, at all costs: and so much the worse for the others if it touches them! And so much the worse for them! I am not made for living in society. Henceforth I shall belong only to myself."

"You think you can do without everybody else?" said Mannheim. "You cannot play your music all by yourself. You need singers, an orchestra, a conductor, an audience, a claque...."

Christopher shouted.

"No! no! no!"

But the last word made him jump.

"A claque! Are you not ashamed?"

"I am not talking of a paid claque (although, indeed, it is the only means yet discovered of revealing the merit of a composition to the audience). But you must have a claque: the

author's coterie is a claque, properly drilled by him: every author has his claque: that is what friends are for."

"I don't want any friends!"

"Then you will be hissed."

"I want to be hissed!"

Mannheim was in the seventh heaven.

"You won't have even that pleasure for long. They won't play you."

"So be it, then! Do you think I care about being a famous man? . . . Yes. I was making for that with all my might. . . . Nonsense! Folly! Idiocy! . . . As if the satisfaction of the vulgarest sort of pride could compensate for all the sacrifices —weariness, suffering, infamy, insults, degradation, ignoble concessions—which are the price of fame! Devil take me if I ever bother my head about such things again! Never again! Publicity is a vulgar infamy. I will be a private citizen and live for myself and those whom I love. . . ."

"Good," said Mannheim, ironically. "You must choose a profession. Why shouldn't you make shoes?"

"Ah! if I were a cobbler like the incomparable Sachs!" cried Christopher. "How happy my life would be! A cobbler all through the week—and a musician on Sunday, privately, intimately, for my own pleasure and that of my friends! What a life that would be! . . . Am I mad to waste my time and trouble for the magnificent pleasure of being a prey to the judgement of idiots? Is it not much better and finer to be loved and understood by a few honest men than to be heard, criticised, and toadied by thousands of fools? . . . The devil of pride and thirst for fame shall never again take me: trust me for that!"

"Certainly," said Mannheim. He thought:

"In an hour he will say just the opposite." He remarked quietly:

"Then I am to go and smooth things down with the *Wagner-Verein?*"

Christopher waved his arms.

"What is the good of my shouting myself hoarse with telling you 'No,' for the last hour? . . . I tell you that I will never set foot inside it again! I loathe all these *Wagner-Vereine,* all these *Vereine,* all these flocks of sheep who have to huddle together to be able to baa in unison. Go and tell those sheep

from me that I am a wolf, that I have teeth, and am not made for the pasture!"

"Good, good. I will tell them," said Mannheim, as he went. He was delighted with his morning's entertainment. He thought:

"He is mad, mad, mad as a hatter. . . ."

His sister to whom he reported the interview at once shrugged her shoulders and said:

"Mad? He would like us to think so! . . . He is stupid, and absurdly vain. . . ."

Christopher went on with his fierce campaign in Waldhaus's *Review*. It was not that it gave him pleasure: criticism disgusted him, and he was always wishing it at the bottom of the sea. But he stuck to it because people were trying to stop him: he did not wish to appear to have given in.

Waldhaus was beginning to be uneasy. As long as he was out of reach he had looked on at the affray with the calmness of an Olympian god. But for some weeks past the other papers had seemed to be beginning to disregard his inviolability: they had begun to attack his vanity as a writer with a rare malevolence in which, had Waldhaus been more subtle, he might have recognised the hand of a friend. As a matter of fact, the attacks were cunningly instigated by Ehrenfeld and Goldenring: they could see no other way of inducing him to stop Christopher's polemics. Their perception was justified. Waldhaus at once declared that Christopher was beginning to weary him: and he withdrew his support. All the staff of the *Review* then tried hard to silence Christopher. But it was as easy to muzzle a dog who is about to devour his prey! Everything they said to him only excited him more. He called them poltroons, and declared that he would say everything—everything that he ought to say. If they wished to get rid of him, they were free to do so! The whole town would know that they were as cowardly as the rest: but he would not go of his own accord.

They looked at each other in consternation, bitterly blaming Mannheim for the trick he had played them in bringing such a madman among them. Mannheim laughed, and tried hard to curb Christopher himself: and he vowed that with the next article Christopher would water his wine. They were

incredulous: but the event proved that Mannheim had not boasted vainly. Christopher's next article, though not a model of courtesy, did not contain a single offensive remark about anybody. Mannheim's method was very simple: they were all amazed at not having thought of it before: Christopher never read what he wrote in the *Review*, and he hardly read the proofs of his articles, only very quickly and carelessly. Adolf Mai had more than once passed caustic remarks on the subject: he said that a printer's error was a disgrace to a Review: and Christopher who did not regard criticism altogether as an art, replied that those who were upbraided in it would understand well enough. Mannheim turned this to account: he said that Christopher was right, and that correcting proofs was printer's work: and he offered to take it over. Christopher was overwhelmed with gratitude: but they told him that such an arrangement would be of service to them and a saving of time for the *Review*. So Christopher left his proofs to Mannheim and asked him to correct them carefully. Mannheim did: it was sport for him. At first he only ventured to tone down certain phrases and to delete here and there certain ungracious epithets. Emboldened by success, he went further with his experiments: he began to alter sentences and their meaning: and he was really skilful in it. The whole art of it consisted in preserving the general appearance of the sentence and its characteristic form while making it say exactly the opposite of what Christopher had meant. Mannheim took far more trouble to disfigure Christopher's articles than he would have done to write them himself: never had he worked so hard. But he enjoyed the result: certain musicians whom Christopher had hitherto pursued with his sarcasms were astounded to see him grow gradually gentle and at last sing their praises. The staff of the *Review* were delighted. Mannheim used to read aloud his lucubrations to them. They roared with laughter. Ehrenfeld and Goldenring would say to Mannheim occasionally:

"Be careful! You are going too far."

"There's no danger," Mannheim would say. And he would go on with it.

Christopher never noticed anything. He used to go to the office of the Review, leave his copy, and not bother about it any more. Sometimes he would take Mannheim aside and say:

"This time I really have done for the swine. Just read..."

Mannheim would read.

"Well, what do you think of it?"

"Terrible, my dear fellow; there's nothing left of them!"

"What do you think they will say?"

"Oh! there will be a fine row."

But there never was a row. On the contrary, everybody beamed at Christopher: people whom he detested would bow to him in the street. One day he came to the office uneasy and scowling: and, throwing a visiting-card on the table, he asked:

"What does this mean?"

It was the card of a musician whom he had slaughtered.

"*A thousand thanks.*"

Mannheim replied with a laugh:

"It is ironical."

Christopher was set at rest.

"Oh!" he said. "I was afraid my article had pleased him."

"He is furious," said Ehrenfeld; "but he does not wish to seem so: he is posing as the strong man, and is just laughing."

"Laughing?... Swine!" said Christopher, furious once more. "I shall write another article about him. He laughs best who laughs last."

"No, no," said Waldhaus anxiously. "I don't think he is laughing at you. It is humility: he is a good Christian. He is holding out the other cheek to the smiter."

"So much the better!" said Christopher. "Ah! Coward! He has asked for it: he shall have his flogging."

Waldhaus tried to intervene. But the others laughed.

"Let him be..." said Mannheim.

"After all..." replied Waldhaus, suddenly reassured, "a little more or less makes no matter!..."

Christopher went away. His colleagues rocked and roared with laughter. When they had had their fill of it Waldhaus said to Mannheim:

"All the same, it was a narrow squeak.... Please be careful. We shall be caught yet."

"Bah!" said Mannheim. "We have plenty of time.... And, besides, I am making friends for him."

II

ENGULFED

Christopher had got so far with his clumsy efforts towards the reform of German art when there happened to pass through the town a troupe of French actors. It would be more exact to say a band; for as usual, they were a collection of poor devils, picked up goodness knows where, and young unknown players too happy to learn their art, provided they were allowed to act. They were all harnessed to the chariot of a famous and elderly actress who was making a tour of Germany, and, passing through the little princely town, gave their performance there.

Waldhaus' Review made a great fuss over them. Mannheim and his friends knew, or pretended to know, about the literary and social life of Paris: they used to repeat gossip picked up in the boulevard newspapers and more or less understood; they represented the French spirit in Germany. That robbed Christopher of any desire to know more about it. Mannheim used to overwhelm him with praises of Paris. He had been there several times; certain members of his family were there. He had relations in every country in Europe, and they had everywhere assumed the nationality and aspect of the country: this tribe of the seed of Abraham included an English baronet, a Belgian senator, a French minister, a deputy in the *Reichstag*, and a Papal Count; and all of them, although they were united and filled with respect for the stock from which they sprang, were sincerely English, Belgian, French, German, or Papal, for their pride never allowed of doubt that the country of their adoption was the greatest of all. Mannheim was paradoxically the only one of them who was pleased to prefer all the countries to which he did not belong. He used often to talk of Paris enthusiastically, but as he was always extravagant in his talk, and, by way of praising the Parisians, used to represent them as a species of scatterbrains, lewd and rowdy, who spent their time in love-making and revolutions without ever taking themselves seriously, Christopher was not greatly attracted by the "Byzantine and decadent republic beyond the Vosges". He used rather to imagine Paris as it was presented in a naïve engraving which he had seen as a frontis-

piece to a book that had recently appeared in a German art publication; the Devil of Notre Dame appeared huddled up above the roofs of the town with the legend:

"*Eternal luxury, like an insatiable Vampire, devours its prey above the great city.*"

Like a good German he despised the debauched Volcae and their literature, of which he only knew lively buffooneries like *L'Aiglon, Madame Sans Gêne,* and a few café songs. The snobbishness of the little town, where those people who were most notoriously incapable of being interested in art flocked noisily to take places at the box office, brought him to an affectation of scornful indifference towards the great actress. He vowed that he would not go one yard to hear her. It was the easier for him to keep his promise as seats had reached an exorbitant price which he could not afford.

The repertoire which the French actors had brought included a few classical pieces; but for the most part it was composed of those idiotic pieces which are expressly manufactured in Paris for exportation, for nothing is more international than mediocrity. Christopher knew *La Tosca,* which was to be the first production of the touring actors; he had seen it in translation adorned with all those easy graces which the company of a little Rhenish theatre can give to a French play: and he laughed scornfully and declared that he was very glad, when he saw his friends go off to the threatre, not to have to see it again. But next day he listened none the less eagerly, without seeming to listen, to the enthusiastic tales of the delightful evening they had had: he was angry at having lost the right to contradict them by having refused to see what everybody was talking about.

The second production announced was a French translation of *Hamlet.* Christopher had never missed an opportunity of seeing a play of Shakespeare's. Shakespeare was to him of the same order as Beethoven, an inexhaustible spring of life. *Hamlet* had been specially dear to him during the period of stress and tumultuous doubts through which he had just passed. In spite of his fear of seeing himself reflected in that magic mirror he was fascinated by it: and he prowled about the theatre notices, though he did not admit that he was longing to book a seat. But he was so obstinate that after what he had said to his friends he would not eat his words: and he

would have stayed at home that evening if chance had not brought him in contact with Mannheim just as he was sadly going home.

Mannheim took his arm and told him angrily, though he never ceased his banter, that an old beast of a relation, his father's sister, had just come down upon them with all her retinue and that they had all to stay at home to welcome her. He had tried to get out of it: but his father would brook no trifling with questions of family etiquette and the respect due to elderly relatives: and as he had to handle his father carefully because he wanted presently to get money out of him, he had had to give in and not go to the play.

"You had tickets?" asked Christopher.

"An excellent box: and I have to go and give it (I am just going now) to that old pig, Grünebaum, papa's partner, so that he can swagger there with the she Grünebaum and their turkey hen of a daughter. Jolly! . . . I want to find something very disagreeable to say to them. They won't mind so long as I give them the tickets—although they would much rather they were bank-notes."

He stopped short with his mouth open and looked at Christopher:

"Oh! but—but just the man I want!"

He chuckled:

"Christopher, are you going to the theatre?"

"No."

"Good. You shall go. I ask it as a favour. You cannot refuse."

Christopher did not understand.

"But I have no seat."

"Here you are!" said Mannheim triumphantly, thrusting the ticket into his hand.

"You are mad," said Christopher. "What about your father's orders?"

Mannheim laughed:

"He will be furious!" he said.

He dried his eyes and went on:

"I shall tap him to-morrow morning as soon as he is up before he knows anything."

"I cannot accept," said Christopher, "knowing that he would not like it."

"It does not concern you: you know nothing about it."

Christopher had unfolded the ticket.

"And what would I do with a box for four?"

"Whatever you like. You can sleep in it, dance if you like. Take some women. You must know some? If need be we can lend you some."

Christopher held out the ticket to Mannheim:

"Certainly not. Take it back."

"Not I," said Mannheim, stepping back a pace. "I can't force you to go if it bores you, but I shan't take it back. You can throw it in the fire or even take it virtuously to the Grünebaums. I don't care. Good night!"

He left Christopher in the middle of the street, ticket in hand, and went away.

Christopher was unhappy about it. He said to himself that he ought to take it to the Grünebaums: but he was not keen about the idea. He went home still pondering, and when later he looked at the clock he saw that he had only just time enough to dress for the theatre. It would be too silly to waste the ticket. He asked his mother to go with him. But Louisa declared that she would rather go to bed. He went. At heart he was filled with childish glee at the thought of his evening. Only one thing worried him: the thought of having to be alone in such a pleasure. He had no remorse about Mannheim's father or the Grünebaums, whose box he was taking: but he was remorseful about those whom he might have taken with him. He thought of the joy it could give to other young people like himself: and it hurt him not to be able to give it them. He cast about but could find nobody to whom he could offer his ticket. Besides, it was late and he must hurry.

As he entered the theatre he passed by the closed window on which a poster announced that there was not a single seat left in the office. Among the people who were turning away from it disappointedly he noticed a girl who could not make up her mind to leave, and was enviously watching the people going in. She was dressed very simply in black; she was not very tall; her face was thin, and she looked delicate; and at the moment he did not notice whether she was pretty or plain. He passed her: then he stopped, turned, and without stopping to think:

"You can't get a seat, Fräulein?" he asked point-blank.

She blushed, and said with a foreign accent:

"No, sir."

"I have a box which I don't know what to do with. Will you make use of it with me?"

She blushed again and thanked him, and said she could not accept. Christopher was embarrassed by her refusal, begged her pardon and tried to insist, but he could not persuade her, although it was obvious that she was dying to accept. He was very perplexed. He made up his mind suddenly.

"There is a way out of the difficulty," he said. "You take the ticket. I don't want it. I have seen the play." (He was boasting.) "It will give you more pleasure than me. Take it, please."

The girl was so touched by his proposal and the cordial manner in which it was made that tears all but came to her eyes. She murmured gratefully that she could not think of depriving him of it.

"Then, come," he said, smiling.

He looked so kind and honest that she was ashamed of having refused, and she said in some confusion:

"Thank you. I will come."

They went in. The Mannheims' box was wide, big, and faced the stage: it was impossible not to be seen in it if they had wished. It is useless to say that their entry passed unnoticed. Christopher made the girl sit at the front, while he stayed a little behind so as not to embarrass her. She sat stiffly upright, not daring to turn her head: she was horribly shy: she would have given much not to have accepted. To give her time to recover her composure and not knowing what to talk to her about, Christopher pretended to look the other way. Whichever way he looked it was easily seen that his presence with an unknown companion among the brilliant people of the boxes was exciting much curiosity and comment. He darted furious glances at those who were looking at him: he was angry that people should go on being interested in him when he took no interest in them. It did not occur to him that their indiscreet curiosity was more busied with his companion than with himself and that there was more offence in it. By way of showing his utter indifference to anything they might say or think he leaned towards the girl and began to talk to

her. She looked so scared by his talking and so unhappy at having to reply, and it seemed to be so difficult for her to wrench out a "Yes" or a "No" without ever daring to look at him, that he took pity on her shyness, and drew back into a corner. Fortunately the play began.

Christopher had not seen the playbill, and he hardly cared to know what part the great actress was playing: he was one of those simple people who go to the theatre to see the play and not the actors. He had never wondered whether the famous player would be Ophelia or the Queen; if he had wondered about it he would have inclined towards the Queen, bearing in mind the ages of the two ladies. But it could never have occurred to him that she would play Hamlet. When he saw Hamlet, and heard his mechanical dolly squeak, it was some time before he could believe it; he wondered if he were not dreaming.

"But who? Who is it?" he asked half aloud. "It can't be . . ."

And when he had to accept that it *was* Hamlet, he rapped out an oath, which fortunately his companion did not hear because she was a foreigner, though it was heard perfectly in the next box: for he was at once indignantly bidden to be silent. He withdrew to the back of the box to swear his fill. He could not recover his temper. If he had been just he would have given homage to the elegance of the travesty and the *tour de force* of nature and art, which made it possible for a woman of sixty to appear in a youth's costume and even to seem beautiful in it—at least to kindly eyes. But he hated all *tours de force,* everything which violates and falsifies Nature. He liked a woman to be a woman, and a man a man. (It does not often happen nowadays.) The childish and absurd travesty of the Leonora of Beethoven did not please him much. But this travesty of Hamlet was beyond all dreams of the preposterous. To make of the robust Dane, fat and pale, choleric, cunning, intellectual, subject to hallucinations, a woman—not even a woman: for a woman playing the man can only be a monster—to make of Hamlet a eunuch or an androgynous betwixt-and-between—the times must be flabby indeed, criticism must be idiotic, to let such disgusting folly be tolerated for a single day and not hissed off the boards! The actress's voice infuriated Christopher. She had that singing, laboured diction, that monotonous melopœia which seems to have been

dear to the least poetic people in the world since the days of the *Champmeslé* and *Hotel de Bourgogne*. Christopher was so exasperated by it that he wanted to go away. He turned his back on the scene, and he made hideous faces against the wall of the box like a child put in the corner. Fortunately his companion dared not look at him: for if she had seen him she would have thought him mad.

Suddenly Christopher stopped making faces. He stopped still and made no sound. A lovely musical voice, a young woman's voice, grave and sweet, was heard. Christopher pricked up his ears. As she went on with her words he turned again, keenly interested to see what bird could warble so. He saw Ophelia. In truth she was nothing like the Ophelia of Shakespeare. She was a beautiful girl, tall, big and fine like a young Greek statue—Electra or Cassandra. She was brimming with life. In spite of her efforts to keep within her part, the force of youth and joy that was in her shone forth from her body, her movements, her gestures, her brown eyes that laughed in spite of herself. Such is the power of physical beauty that Christopher who a moment before had been merciless in judging the interpretation of Hamlet never for a moment thought of regretting that Ophelia was hardly at all like his image of her: and he sacrificed his image to the present vision of her remorselessly. With the unconscious faithlessness of people of passion he even found a profound truth in the youthful ardour brimming in the depths of the chaste and unhappy virgin heart. But the magic of the voice, pure, warm, and velvety, worked the spell: every word sounded like a lovely chord: about every syllable there hovered like the scent of thyme or wild mint, the laughing accent of the Midi with its full rhythm. Strange was this vision of an Ophelia from Arles! In it was something of that golden sun and its wild north-west wind, its *mistral*.

Christopher forgot his companion and came and sat by her side at the front of the box; he never took his eyes off the beautiful actress whose name he did not know. But the audience, who had not come to see an unknown player, paid no attention to her, and only applauded when the female Hamlet spoke. That made Christopher growl and call them "Idiots!" in a low voice which could be heard ten yards away.

It was not until the curtain was lowered upon the first act

that he remembered the existence of his companion, and seeing that she was still shy he thought with a smile of how he must have scared her with his extravagances. He was not far wrong: the girl whom chance had thrown in his company for a few hours was almost morbidly shy; she must have been in an abnormal state of excitement to have accepted Christopher's invitation. She had hardly accepted it than she had wished at any cost to get out of it, to make some excuse and to escape. It had been much worse for her when she had seen that she was an object of general curiosity, and her unhappiness had been incrased almost past endurance when she heard behind her back (she dared not turn round) her companion's low growls and imprecations. She expected anything now, and when he came and sat by her she was frozen with terror: what eccentricity would her commit next? She would gladly have sunk into the ground fathoms down. She drew back instinctively: she was afraid of touching him.

But all her fears vanished when the interval came, and she heard him say quite kindly:

"I am an unpleasant companion, eh? I beg your pardon."

Then she looked at him, and saw the kind smile which had induced her to come with him.

He went on:

"I cannot hide what I think.... But you know it is too much!... That woman, that old woman!..."

He made a face of disgust.

She smiled, and said in a low voice:

"It is fine, in spite of everything."

He noticed her accent, and asked:

"You are a foreigner?"

"Yes," said she.

He looked at her modest gown.

"A governess?" he said.

"Yes."

"What nationality?"

She said:

"I am French."

He made a gesture of surprise:

"French? I should not have thought it."

"Why?" she asked timidly.

"You are so... serious!" said he.

(She thought it was not altogether a compliment from him.)

"There are serious people also in France," said she confusedly.

He looked at her honest little face, with its broad forehead, little straight nose, delicate chin, and thin cheeks framed in her chestnut hair. It was not she that he saw: he was thinking of the beautiful actress. He repeated:

"It is strange that you should be French! . . . Are you really of the same nationality as Ophelia? One would never think it."

After a moment's silence he went on:

"How beautiful she is!" without noticing that he seemed to be making a comparison between the actress and his companion that was not at all flattering to her. But she felt it: but she did not mind: for she was of the same opinion. He tried to find out about the actress from her: but she knew nothing: it was plain that she did not know much about the theatre.

"You must be glad to hear French?" he asked. He meant it in jest, but he touched her.

"Ah!" she said, with an accent of sincerity which struck him, "it does me so much good! I am stifled here."

He looked at her more closely: she clasped her hands, and seemed to be oppressed. But at once she thought of how her words might hurt him:

"Forgive me," she said. "I don't know what I am saying."

He laughed:

"Don't beg pardon! You are quite right. You don't need to be French to be stifled here. Ouf!"

He threw back his shoulders and took a long breath.

But she was ashamed of having been so free, and relapsed into silence. Besides, she had just seen that the people in the boxes next to them were listening to what they were saying: he noticed it, too, and was wrathful. They broke off: and until the end of the interval he went out into the corridor. The girl's words were ringing in his ears, but he was lost in dreams: the image of Ophelia filled his thoughts. During the succeeding acts she took hold of him completely, and when the beautiful actress came to the mad scene and the melancholy songs of love and death, her voice gave forth notes so moving that he was bowled over: he felt that he was going to burst into tears. Angry with himself for what he took to be a sign of weakness (for he would not admit that a true artist can weep) and not

wishing to make an object of himself, he left the box abruptly. The corridors and the foyer were empty. In his agitation he went down the stairs of the theatre, and went out without knowing it. He had to breathe the cold night air, and to go striding through the dark, half-empty streets. He came to himself by the edge of a canal, and leaned on the parapet of the bank and watched the silent water on which the reflections of the street lamps danced in the darkness. His soul was like that: it was dark and heaving: he could see nothing in it but great joy dancing on the surface. The clocks rang the hour. It was impossible for him to go back to the theatre and hear the end of the play. To see the triumph of Fortinbras? No, that did not tempt him. A fine triumph that! Who thinks of envying the conqueror? Who would be he after being gorged with all the wild and absurd savagery of life? The whole play is a formidable indictment of life. But there is such a power of life in it that sadness becomes joy, and bitterness intoxicates....

Christopher went home without a thought for the unknown girl, whose name he had not even ascertained.

Next morning he went to see the actress at the little third-rate hotel in which the impresario had quartered her with her comrades, while the great actress had put up at the best hotel in the town. He was conducted to a very untidy room, where the remains of breakfast were left on an open piano, together with hairpins and torn and dirty sheets of music. In the next room Ophelia was singing at the top of her voice, like a child, for the pleasure of making a noise. She stopped for a moment when her visitor was announced to ask merrily in a loud voice, without caring whether she were heard through the wall:

"What does he want? What is his name? Christopher? Christopher what? Christopher Krafft? What a name!"

(She repeated it two or three times, rolling her *r*'s terribly.)

"It is like a swear——"

(She swore.)

"Is he young or old? Pleasant? Very well. I'll come."

She began to sing again:

"*Nothing is sweeter than my love...*" while she rushed about her room cursing a tortoise-shell pin which had got lost

in all the rubbish. She lost patience, began to grumble, and shouted. Although he could not see her, Christopher followed all her movements on the other side of the wall in imagination, and laughed to himself. At last he heard steps approaching, the door was flung open, and Ophelia appeared.

She was half dressed, in a loose gown which she was holding about her waist: her bare arms showed in her wide sleeves: her hair was carelessly done, and locks of it fell down into her eyes and over her cheeks. Her fine brown eyes smiled, her lips smiled, her cheeks smiled, and a charming dimple in her chin smiled. In her beautiful grave melodious voice she asked him to excuse her appearance. She knew that there was nothing to excuse, and that he could only be very grateful to her for it. She thought he was a journalist come to interview her. Instead of being annoyed when he told her that he had come to her entirely of his own accord, and because he admired her, she was delighted. She was a good girl, affectionate, delighted to please, and making no effort to conceal her delight. Christopher's visit and his enthusiasm made her very happy—she was not yet spoiled by flattery. She was so natural in all her movements and ways, even in her little vanities and her naïve delight in giving pleasure, that he was not embarrassed for a single moment. They became old friends at once. He could jabber a few words of French: and she could jabber a few words of German: after an hour they told each other all their secrets. She never thought of sending him away. The splendid gay southern creature, intelligent and warm-hearted, who would have been bored to tears with her stupid companions and in a country whose language she did not know, a country without the natural joy that was in herself, was glad to find someone to talk to. As for Christopher, it was an untold blessing for him to meet the free-hearted girl of the Midi, filled with the life of the people, in the midst of his narrow and insincere fellow-citizens. He did not yet know the workings of such natures which, unlike the Germans, have no more in their minds and hearts than they show, and often not even as much. But at least she was young, she was alive, she said frankly, rawly, what she thought: she judged everything freely from a new and a fresh point of view: in her it was possible to breathe a little of the north-west wind that sweeps away mists. She was gifted. Uneducated and unthinking, she could

at once feel with her whole heart and be sincerely moved by things which were beautiful and good; and then, a moment later she would burst out laughing. She was a coquette and made eyes; she did not mind showing her bare arms and neck under her half-open gown; she would have liked to turn Christopher's head, but it was all purely instinctive. There was no thought of gaining her own ends in her, and she much preferred to laugh, and talk blithely, to be a good fellow, a good chum, without ceremony or awkwardness. She told him about the underworld of the theatre, her little sorrows, the silly susceptibilities of her comrades, the bickerings of Jezebel (so she called the great actress) who took good care not to let her shine. He confided his sufferings at the hands of the Germans: she clapped her hands and played chorus to him. She was kind, and would not speak ill of anybody; but that did not keep her from doing so, and while she blamed herself for her malice when she laughed at anybody, she had a fund of mocking humour and that realistic and witty gift of observation which belongs to the people of the South; she could not resist it, and drew cuttingly satirical portraits. With her pale lips she laughed merrily to show her teeth, like those of a puppy, and dark eyes shone in her pale face, which was a little discoloured by grease-paint.

They noticed suddenly that they had been talking for more than an hour. Christopher proposed to come for Corinne—that was her stage name—in the afternoon and show her over the town. She was delighted with the idea, and they arranged to meet immediately after dinner.

At the appointed hour he turned up. Corinne was sitting in the little drawing-room of the hotel, with a book in her hand, which she was reading aloud. She greeted him with smiling eyes, but did not stop reading until she had finished her sentence. Then she signed to him to sit down on the sofa by her side.

"Sit there," she said, "and don't talk. I am going over my part. I shall have finished in a quarter of an hour."

She followed the script with her fingernail, and read very quickly and carelessly, like a little girl in a hurry. He offered to hear her her words. She passed him the book, and got up to repeat what she had learned. She floundered, and would repeat the end of one sentence four times before going on to

the next. She shook her head as she recited her part; her hairpins fell down and all over the room. When she could not recollect some word, she was as impatient as a naughty child; sometimes she swore comically or she would use big words—one word with which she apostrophised herself was very big and very short. Christopher was astonished by the mixture of talent and childishness in her. She would produce moving tones of voice quite aptly, but in the middle of a speech into which she seemed to be throwing her whole heart she would say a whole string of words that had absolutely no meaning. She recited her lesson like a parrot, without troubling about its meaning, and then she produced burlesque nonsense. She did not worry about it. When she saw it, she would shout with laughter. At last she said: "Zut!" snatched the book from him, flung it into a corner of the room, and said:

"Holidays! The hour has struck! . . . Now let us go out."

He was a little anxious about her part, and asked:

"You think you will know it?"

She replied confidently:

"Certainly. What is the prompter for?" She went into her room to put on her hat. Christopher sat at the piano while he was waiting for her, and struck a few chords. From the next room she called:

"Oh! What is that? Play some more! How pretty it is!"

She ran in, pinning on her hat. He went on. When he had finished she wanted him to play more. She went into ecstasies with all the little arch exclamations habitual to Frenchwomen which they make about *Tristan* and a cup of chocolate equally. It made Christopher laugh; it was a change from the tremendous affected, clumsy exclamations of the Germans; they were both exaggerated in different directions; one made a mountain out of a molehill, the other made a molehill out of a mountain; the French was not less ridiculous than the German, but for the moment it seemed more pleasant because he loved the lips from which it came. Corinne wanted to know what he was playing, and when she learned that he had composed it she gave a shout. He had told her during their conversation in the morning that he was a composer, but she had hardly listened to him. She sat by him and insisted on his playing everything that he had composed. Their walk was forgotten. It was not mere politeness on her part; she adored music, and

had an admirable instinct for it which supplied the deficiencies of her education. At first he did not take her seriously, and played his easiest melodies. But when he had played a passage by which he set more store, and saw that she preferred it, too, although he had not said anything about it, he was joyfully surprised. With the naïve astonishment of the Germans when they meet a Frenchman who is a good musician, he said:

"Odd. How good your taste is! I should never have thought it. . . ."

Corinne laughed in his face.

He amused himself then by selecting compositions more and more difficult to understand, to see how far she would go with him. But she did not seem to be put out by his boldness, and after a particularly new melody which Christopher himself had almost come to doubt, because he had never succeeded in having it accepted in Germany, he was greatly astonished when Corinne begged him to play it again, and she got up and began to sing the notes from memory almost without a mistake! He turned towards her and took her hands warmly:

"But you are a musician!" he cried.

She began to laugh, and explained that she had made her début as a singer in provincial opera houses, but that an impresario of touring companies had recognised her disposition towards the poetic theatre, and had enrolled her in its service. He exclaimed:

"What a pity!"

"Why?" said she. "Poetry also is a sort of music."

She made him explain to her the meaning of his *Lieder*; he told her the German words, and she repeated them with easy mimicry, copying even the movements of his lips and eyes as he pronounced the words. When she tried to sing from memory, she made grotesque mistakes, and when she forgot, she invented words, guttural and barbarously sonorous, which made them both laugh. She did not tire of making him play, nor he of playing for her and hearing her pretty voice; she did not know the tricks of the trade, and sang a little from the throat, like a little girl, and there was a curious fragile quality in her voice that was very touching. She told him frankly what she thought. Although she could not explain why she liked or disliked anything, there was always some grain of

sense hidden in her judgement. The odd thing was that she found least pleasure in the most classical passages which were most appreciated in Germany; she paid him a few compliments out of politeness; but they obviously meant nothing. As she had no musical culture, she had not the pleasure which amateurs and even artists find in what is *already heard*, a pleasure which often makes them unconsciously reproduce, or, in a new composition, like, forms or formulæ which they have already used in old compositions. Nor did she have the German taste for melodious sentimentality (or, at least, her sentimentality was different; Christopher did not yet know its failings); she did not go into ecstasies over the soft insipid music preferred in Germany; she did not single out the most melodious of his *Lieder*—a melody which he would have liked to destroy because his friends, only too glad to be able to compliment him on something, were always talking about it. Corinne's dramatic instinct made her prefer the melodies which frankly reproduced a certain passion; he also set most store by them. And yet she did not hesitate to show her lack of sympathy with certain rude harmonies which seemed quite natural to Christopher; they gave her a sort of shock when she came upon them; she would stop then and ask "if it was really so." When he said "Yes," then she would rush at the difficulty; but she would make a little grimace which did not escape Christopher. Sometimes she would even prefer to skip the bar. Then he would play it again on the piano.

"You don't like that?" he would ask.

She would screw up her nose.

"It is wrong," she would say.

"Not at all," he would reply with a laugh. "It is quite right. Think of its meaning. It is right there, isn't it?"

(He pointed to her heart.)

But she would shake her head:

"Maybe; but it is wrong here." (She pulled her ear.)

And she would be a little shocked by the sudden outbursts of German declamation.

"Why should he talk so loud?" she would ask. "He is all alone. Aren't you afraid of his neighbours overhearing him? It is as though—(Forgive me! You won't be angry?)—he were hailing a boat."

He was not angry; he laughed heartily, he recognised that

there was some truth in what she said. Her remarks amused him; nobody had ever said such things before. They agreed that declamation in singing generally deforms the natural word like a magnifying-glass. Corinne asked Christopher to write music for a piece in which she would speak to the accompaniment of the orchestra, singing a few sentences every now and then. He was fired by the idea, in spite of the difficulties of the stage setting, which, he thought, Corinne's musical voice would easily overcome, and they made plans for the future. It was not far short of five o'clock when they thought of going out. Night fell early. They could not think of going for a walk. Corinne had a rehearsal at the theatre in the evening; nobody was allowed to be present. She made him promise to come and fetch her during the next afternoon to take the walk they had planned.

Next day they did almost the same again. He found Corinne in front of her mirror, perched on a high stool, swinging her legs; she was trying on a wig. Her dresser was there, and a hairdresser of the town, to whom she was giving instructions about a curl which she wished to have higher up. As she looked in the glass she saw Christopher smiling behind her back; she put out her tongue at him. The hairdresser went away with the wig, and she turned gaily to Christopher:

"Good day, my friend!" she said.

She held up her cheek to be kissed. He had not expected such intimacy, but he took advantage of it all the same. She did not attach so much importance to the favour; it was to her a greeting like any other.

"Oh! I am happy!" said she. "It will do very well tonight." (She was talking of her wig.) "I was so wretched! If you had come this morning, you would have found me absolutely miserable."

He asked why.

It was because the Parisian hairdresser had made a mistake in packing, and had sent a wig which was not suitable to the part.

"Quite flat," she said, "and falling straight down. When I saw it I wept like a Magdalen. Didn't I, Désirée?"

"When I came in," said Désirée, "I was afraid for Madame. Madame was quite white. Madame looked like death."

Christopher laughed. Corinne saw him in her mirror:

"Heartless wretch; it makes you laugh," she said indignantly.

She began to laugh, too.

He asked her how the rehearsal had gone. Everything had gone off well. She would have liked the other parts to be cut more and her own less. They talked so much that they wasted part of the afternoon. She dressed slowly; she amused herself by asking Christopher's opinion about her dresses. Christopher praised her elegance, and told her naïvely in his Franco-German jargon that he had never seen anybody so "luxurious". She looked at him for a moment, and then burst out laughing.

"What have I said?" he asked. "Have I said anything wrong?"

"Yes, yes," she cried, rocking with laughter. "You have indeed."

At last they went out. Her striking costume and her exuberant chatter attracted attention. She looked at everything with her mocking eyes, and made no effort to conceal her impressions. She chuckled at the dressmaker's shops, and at the picture post-card shops in which sentimental scenes, comic and obscene drawings, the town *cocottes*, the Imperial family, the Emperor as a sea dog holding the wheel of the *Germania* and defying the heavens, were all thrown together higgledy-piggledy. She giggled at a dinner-service decoration with Wagner's cross-grained face, or at a hairdresser's shop-window, in which there was the wax head of a man. She made no attempt to modify her hilarity over the patriotic monument representing the old Emperor in a travelling coat and a peaked cap, together with Prussia, the German States, and a nude Genius of War. She made remarks about anything in the faces of the people or their way of speaking that struck her as funny. Her victims were left in no doubt about it, as she maliciously picked out their absurdities. Her instinctive mimicry made her sometimes imitate with her mouth and nose their broad grimaces and frowns, without thinking; and she would blow out her cheeks as she repeated fragments of sentences and words that struck her as grotesque in sound as she caught them. He laughed heartily, and was not at all embarrassed by her impertinence, for he was no longer easily embarrassed.

Fortunately, he had no great reputation to lose, or his walk would have ruined it for ever.

They visited the cathedral. Corinne wanted to go to the top of the spire, in spite of her high heels and long dress, which swept the stairs or was caught in a corner of the staircase; she did not worry about it, but pulled the stuff, which split, and went on climbing, holding it up. She wanted very much to ring the bells. From the top of the tower she declaimed Victor Hugo (he did not understand it), and sang a popular French song. After that she played the muezzin. Dusk was falling. They went down into the cathedral, where the dark shadows were creeping along the gigantic walls in which the magic eyes of the windows were shining. Kneeling in one of the side chapels, Christopher saw the girl who had shared his box at *Hamlet*. She was so absorbed in her prayers that she did not see him: he saw that she was looking sad and tired. He would have liked to speak to her, just to say, "How do you do?" but Corinne dragged him off like a whirlwind.

They parted soon afterwards. She had to get ready for the performance, which began early, as usual in Germany. He had hardly reached home when there was a ring at the door and a letter from Corinne was handed in:

"Luck! Jezebel ill! No performance! No school! Come! Let us dine together!

"Your friend,

"CORINETTE.

"P.S.—Bring plenty of music!"

It was some time before he understood. When he did understand he was as happy as Corinne, and went to the hotel at once. He was afraid of finding the whole company assembled at dinner; but he saw nobody. Corinne herself was not there. At last he heard her laughing voice at the back of the house: he went to look for her and found her in the kitchen. She had taken it into her head to cook a dish in her own way, one of those southern dishes which fills the whole neighbourhood with its aroma and would awaken a stone. She was on excellent terms with the large proprietress of the hotel, and they were jabbering in a horrible jargon that was a mixture of German, French, and negro, though there is no word to describe it in any language. They were laughing loudly and making each

other taste their cooking. Christopher's appearance made them noisier than ever. They tried to push him out; but he struggled and succeeded in tasting the famous dish. He made a face. She said he was a barbarous Teuton and that it was no use putting herself out for him.

They went up to the little sitting-room where the table was laid; there were only two places, for himself and Corinne. He could not help asking her where her companions were. Corinne waved her hands carelessly:

"I don't know."

"Don't you eat together?"

"Never! We see enough of each other at the theatre! . . . And it would be awful if we had to meet at meals! . . ."

It was so different from German custom that he was surprised and charmed by it.

"I thought," he said, "you were a sociable people!"

"Well," said she, "am I not sociable?"

"Sociable means living in society. We have to see each other! Men, women, children, we all belong to societies from birth to death. We are always making societies: we eat, sing, think in societies. When the societies sneeze, we sneeze too: we don't have a drink except with our societies."

"That must be amusing," said she. "Why not out of the same glass?"

"Brotherly, isn't it?"

"That for fraternity! I like being 'brotherly' with people I like: not with the others. . . . Pooh! That's not society: that is an ant-heap."

"Well, you can imagine how happy I am here, for I think as you do."

"Come to us, then!"

He asked nothing better. He questioned her about Paris and the French. She told him much that was not perfectly accurate. Her southern propensity for boasting was mixed with an instinctive desire to shine before him. According to her, everybody in Paris was free: and as everybody in Paris was intelligent, everybody made good use of their liberty, and no one abused it. Everybody did what they liked: thought, believed, loved or did not love, as they liked; nobody had anything to say about it. There nobody meddled with other people's beliefs, or spied on their consciences or tried to regulate their

thoughts. There politicians never dabbled in literature or the arts, and never gave orders, jobs, and money to their friends or clients. There little cliques never disposed of reputation or success, journalists were never bought; there men of letters never entered into controversies with the Church, that could lead to nothing. There criticism never stifled unknown talent. or exhausted its praises upon recognised talent. There success, success at all costs, did not justify the means, and command the adoration of the public. There were only gentle manners, kindly and sweet. There was never any bitterness, never any scandal. Everybody helped everybody else. Every worthy newcomer was certain to find hands held out to him and the way made smooth for him. Pure love of beauty filled the chivalrous and disinterested souls of the French, and they were only absurd in their idealism, which, in spite of their acknowledged wit, made them the dupes of other nations.

Christopher listened open-mouthed. It was certainly marvellous. Corinne marvelled herself as she heard her words. She had forgotten what she had told Christopher the day before about the difficulties of her past life. He gave no more thought to it than she.

And yet Corinne was not only concerned with making the German love her country: she wanted to make herself loved, too. A whole evening without flirtation would have seemed austere and rather absurd to her. She made eyes at Christopher; but it was trouble wasted: he did not notice it. Christopher did not know what it was to flirt. He loved or did not love. When he did not love he was miles from any thought of love. He liked Corinne enormously. He felt the attraction of her southern nature; it was so new to him. And her sweetness and good humour, her quick and lively intelligence: many more reasons than he needed for loving. But the spirit bloweth where it listeth. It did not blow in that direction, and as for playing at love, in love's absence, the idea had never occurred to him.

Corinne was amused by his coldness. She sat by his side at the piano while he played the music he had brought with him, and put her arm round his neck, and to follow the music she leaned towards the keyboard, almost pressing her cheek against his. He felt her hair touch his face, and quite close to him saw the corner of her mocking eye, her pretty little mouth,

and the light down on her tip-tilted nose. She waited, smiling—she waited. Christopher did not understand the invitation. Corinne was in his way: that was all he thought of. Mechanically he broke free from her and moved his chair. And when, a moment later, he turned to speak to Corinne, he saw that she was choking with laughter: her cheeks were dimpled, her lips were pressed together, and she seemed to be holding herself in.

"What is the matter?" he said, in his astonishment.

She looked at him and laughed aloud.

He did not understand.

"Why are you laughing?" he asked. "Did I say anything funny?"

The more he insisted, the more she laughed. When she had almost finished she had only to look at his crestfallen appearance to break out again. She got up, ran to the sofa at the other end of the room, and buried her face in the cushions to laugh her fill; her whole body shook with it. He began to laugh too, came towards her, and slapped her on the back. When she had done laughing she raised her head, dried the tears in her eyes, and held out her hands to him.

"What a good boy you are!" she said.

"No worse than another."

She went on, shaking occasionally with laughter, still holding his hands.

"Frenchwomen are not serious?" she asked. (She pronounced it: "*Françouèse.*")

"You are making fun of me," he said good-humouredly.

She looked at him kindly, shook his hands vigorously, and said:

"Friends?"

"Friends!" said he, shaking her hand.

"You will think of Corinette when she is gone? You won't be angry with the Frenchwoman for not being serious?"

"And Corinette won't be angry with the barbarous Teuton for being so stupid?"

"That is why she loves him.... You will come and see her in Paris?"

"It is a promise.... And she—she will write to him?"

"I swear it.... You say: 'I swear.'"

"I swear."

"No, not like that. You must hold up your hand." She recited the oath of the Horatii. She made him promise to write a play for her, a melodrama, which could be translated into French and played in Paris by her. She was going away next day with her company. He promised to go and see her again the day after at Frankfurt, where they were giving a performance.

They stayed talking for some time. She presented Christopher with a photograph in which she was much décolletée, draped only in a garment fastening below her shoulders. They parted gaily, and kissed like brother and sister. And, indeed, once Corinne had seen that Christopher was fond of her, but not at all in love, she began to be fond of him, too, without love, as a good friend.

Their sleep was not troubled by it. He could not see her off next day, because he was occupied by a rehearsal. But on the day following he managed to go to Frankfurt as he had promised. It was a few hours' journey by rail. Corinne hardly believed Christopher's promise. But he had taken it seriously, and when the performance began he was there. When he knocked at her dressing-room door during the interval, she gave a cry of glad surprise and threw her arms round his neck with her usual exuberance. She was sincerely grateful to him for having come. Unfortunately for Christopher, she was much more sought after in the city of rich, intelligent Jews, who could appreciate her actual beauty and her future success. Almost every minute there was a knock at the door, and it opened to reveal men with heavy faces and quick eyes, who said the conventional things with a thick accent. Corinne naturally made eyes, and then she would go on talking to Christopher in the same affected, provoking voice, and that irritated him. And he found no pleasure in the calm lack of modesty with which she went on dressing in his presence, and the paint and grease with which she larded her arms, throat, and face filled him with profound disgust. He was on the point of going away without seeing her again after the performance; but when he said good-bye and begged to be excused from going to the supper that was to be given to her after the play, she was so hurt by it and so affectionate, too, that he could not hold out against her. She had a timetable brought, so as to prove that he could and must stay an hour with her. He only

needed to be convinced, and he was at the supper. He was even able to control his annoyance with the follies that were indulged in and his irritation at Corinne's coquetries with all and sundry. It was imposible to be angry with her. She was an honest girl, without any moral principles, lazy, sensual, pleasure-loving, childishly coquettish; but at the same time so loyal, so kind, and all her faults were so spontaneous and so healthy that it was only possible to smile at them and even to love them. Christopher, who was sitting opposite her, watched her animation, her radiant eyes, her sticky lips, with their Italian smile—that smile in which there is kindness, subtlety, and a sort of heavy greediness. He saw her more clearly than he had yet done. Some of her features reminded him of Ada: certain gestures, certain looks, certain sensual and rather coarse tricks—the eternal feminine. But what he loved in her was her southern nature, that generous nature which is not niggardly with its gifts, which never troubles to fashion drawing-room beauties and literary cleverness, but harmonious creatures who are made body and mind to grow in the air and the sun. When he left she got up from the table to say good-bye to him away from the others. They kissed and renewed their promises to write and meet again.

He took the last train home. At the station a train coming from the opposite direction was waiting. In the carriage opposite his—a third-class compartment—Christopher saw the young Frenchwoman who had been with him to the performance of *Hamlet*. She saw Christopher and recognised him. They were both astonished. They bowed and did not move, and dared not look again. And yet he had seen at once that she was wearing a little travelling toque and had an old valise by her side. It did not occur to him that she was leaving the country. He thought she must be going away for a few days. He did not know whether he ought to speak to her. He stopped, turned over in his mind what to say, and was just about to lower the window of the carriage to address a few words to her, when the signal was given. He gave up the idea. A few seconds passed before the train moved. They looked straight at each other. Each was alone, and their faces were pressed against the windows, and they looked into each other's eyes through the night. They were separated by two windows. If they had reached out their hands they could have touched each other.

So near. So far. The carriages shook heavily. She was still looking at him, shy no longer, now that they were parting. They were so absorbed in looking at each other that they never even thought of bowing for the last time. She was slowly borne away. He saw her disappear, and the train which bore her plunged into the night. Like two circling worlds, they had passed close to each other in infinite space, and now they sped apart perhaps for eternity.

When she had disappeared he felt the emptiness that her strange eyes had left in him, and he did not understand why; but the emptiness was there. Sleepy, with eyes half-closed, lying in a corner of the carriage, he felt her eyes looking into his, and all other thoughts ceased, to let him feel them more keenly. The image of Corinne fluttered outside his heart like an insect breaking its wings against a window; but he did not let it in.

He found it again when he got out of the train on his arrival, when the keen night air and his walk through the streets of the sleeping town had shaken off his drowsiness. He scowled at the thought of the pretty actress, with a mixture of pleasure and irritation, according as he recalled her affectionate ways or her vulgar coquetries.

"Oh! these French people," he growled, laughing softly, while he was undressing quietly, so as not to waken his mother, who was asleep in the next room.

A remark that he had heard the other evening in the box occurred to him:

"There are others also."

At his first encounter with France she laid before him the enigma of her double nature. But, like all Germans, he did not trouble to solve it, and as he thought of the girl in the train he said quietly:

"She does not look like a Frenchwoman."

As if a German could say what is French and what is not.

French or not, she filled his thoughts; for he woke in the middle of the night with a pang: he had just remembered the valise on the seat by the girl's side; and suddenly the idea that she had gone for ever crossed his mind. The idea must have come to him at the time, but he had not thought of it. It filled him with a strange sadness. He shrugged his shoulders.

"What does it matter to me?" he said. "It is not my affair."

He went to sleep.

But next day the first person he met when he went out was Mannheim, who called him "Blücher", and asked him if he had made up his mind to conquer all France. From the garrulous newsmonger he learned that the story of the box had had a success exceeding all Mannheim's expectations.

"Thanks to you! Thanks to you!" cried Mannheim. "You are a great man. I am nothing compared with you."

"What have I done?" said Christopher.

"You are wonderful!" Mannheim replied. "I am jealous of you. To shut the box in the Grünebaums' faces, and then to ask the French governess instead of them—no, that takes the cake! I should never have thought of that!"

"She was the Grünebaums' governess?" said Christopher in amazement.

"Yes. Pretend you don't know, pretend to be innocent. You'd better! . . . My father is beside himself. The Grünebaums are in a rage! . . . It was not for long: they have sacked the girl."

"What!" cried Christopher. "They have dismissed her? Dismissed her because of me?

"Didn't you know?" said Mannheim. "Didn't she tell you?"

Christopher was in despair.

"You mustn't be angry, old man," said Mannheim. "It does not matter. Besides, one had only to expect that the Grünebaums would find out . . ."

"What?" cried Christopher. "Find out what?"

"That she was your mistress, of course!"

"But I do not even know her. I don't know who she is."

Mannheim smiled, as if to say:

"You take me for a fool."

Christopher lost his temper and bade Mannheim do him the honour of believing what he said. Mannheim said:

"Then it is even more humorous."

Christopher worried about it, and talked of going to the Grünebaums and telling them the facts and justifying the girl. Mannheim dissuaded him.

"My dear fellow," he said, "anything you may say will only convince them of the contrary. Besides, it is too late. The girl has gone away."

Christopher was utterly sick at heart and tried to trace the young Frenchwoman. He wanted to write to her to beg her pardon. But nothing was known of her. He applied to the Grünebaums, but they snubbed him. They did not know themselves where she had gone, and they did not care. The idea of the harm he had done in trying to do good tortured Christopher: he was remorseful. But added to his remorse was a mysterious attraction, which shone upon him from the eyes of the woman who was gone. Attraction and remorse both seemed to be blotted out, engulfed in the flood of the day's new thoughts. But they endured in the depths of his heart. Christopher did not forget the woman whom he called his victim. He had sworn to meet her again. He knew how small were the chances of his ever seeing her again: and he was sure that he would see her again.

As for Corinne, she never answered his letters. But three months later, when he had given up expecting to hear from her, he received a telegram of forty words of utter nonsense, in which she addressed him in little familiar terms, and asked "if they were still fond of each other." Then, after nearly a year's silence, there came a scrappy letter scrawled in her enormous childish zigzag writing, in which she tried to play the lady—a few affectionate, droll words. And there she left it. She did not forget him, but she had no time to think of him.

Still under the spell of Corinne and full of the ideas they had exchanged about art, Christopher dreamed of writing the music for a play in which Corinne should act and sing a few airs—a sort of poetic melodrama. That form of art once so much in favour in Germany, passionately admired by Mozart, and practised by Beethoven, Weber, Mendelssohn and Schumann, and all the great classics, had fallen into discredit since the triumph of Wagnerism, which claimed to have realised the definite formula of the theatre and music. The Wagnerian pedants, not content with proscribing every new melodrama, busied themselves with dressing up the old melodramas and operas. They carefully effaced every trace of spoken dialogue, and wrote for Mozart, Beethoven, or Weber, recitations in their own manner; they were convinced that they were doing a service to the fame of the masters and filling out their thoughts by the pious deposit of their dung upon masterpieces.

Christopher, who had been made more sensible of the heaviness, and often the ugliness, of Wagnerian declamation by Corinne, had for some time been debating whether it was not nonsense and an offence against nature to harness and yoke together the spoken word and the word sung in the theatre: it was like harnessing a horse and a bird to a cart. Speech and singing each had its rhythm. It was comprehensible that an artist should sacrifice one of the two arts to the triumph of that which he preferred. But to try to find a compromise between them was to sacrifice both: it was to want speech no longer to be speech, and singing no longer to be singing; to want singing to let its vast flood be confined between the banks of monotonous canals, to want speech to cloak its lovely naked limbs with rich, heavy stuffs which must paralyse its gestures and movements. Why not leave both with their spontaneity and freedom of movement? Like a beautiful girl walking tranquilly, lithely along a stream, dreaming as she goes: the gay murmur of the water lulls her dreams, and unconsciously she brings her steps and her thoughts in tune with the song of the stream. So being both free, music and poetry would go side by side, dreaming, their dreams mingling. Assuredly all music was not good for such a union, nor all poetry. The opponents of melodrama had good ground for attack in the coarseness of the attempts which had been made in that form, and of the interpreters. Chritsopher had for long shared their dislike: the stupidity of the actors who delivered these recitations spoken to an instrumental accompaniment, without bothering about the accompaniment, without trying to merge their voices in it, rather, on the contrary, trying to prevent anything being heard but themselves, was calculated to revolt any musical ear. But since he had tasted the beauty of Corinne's harmonious voice—that liquid and pure voice which played upon music like a ray of light on water, which wedded every turn of a melody, which was like the most fluid and most free singing—he had caught a glimpse of the beauty of a new art.

Perhaps he was right, but he was still too inexperienced to venture without peril upon a form which—if it is meant to be beautiful and really artistic—is the most difficult of all. That art especially demands one essential condition, the perfect harmony of the combined efforts of the poet, the musician, and the actors. Christopher had no tremors about it: he hurled

himself blindly at an unknown art of which the laws were known only to himself.

His first idea had been to clothe in music a fairy fantasy of Shakespeare or an act of the second part of *Faust*. But the theatres showed little disposition to make the experiment. It would be too costly and appeared absurd. They were quite willing to admit Christopher's efficiency in music, but that he should take upon himself to have ideas about poetry and the theatre made them smile. They did not take him seriously. The world of music and the world of poetry were like two foreign and secretly hostile states. Christopher had to accept the collaboration of a poet to be able to set foot upon poetic territory, and he was not allowed to choose his own poet. He would not have dared to choose himself. He did not trust his taste in poetry. He had been told that he knew nothing about it; and, indeed, he could not understand the poetry which was admired by those about him. With his usual honesty and stubbornness, he had tried hard sometimes to feel the beauty of some of these works, but he had always been bewildered and a little ashamed of himself. No, decidedly he was not a poet. In truth, he loved passionately certain old poets, and that consoled him a little. But no doubt he did not love them as they should be loved. Had he not once expressed the ridiculous idea that those poets only are great who remain great even when they are translated into prose, and even into the prose of a foreign language, and that words have no value apart from the soul which they express? His friends had laughed at him. Mannheim had called him a goose. He did not try to defend himself. As every day he saw, through the example of writers who talk of music, the absurdity of artists who attempt to judge any art other than their own, he resigned himself—though a little incredulous at heart—to his incompetence in poetry, and he shut his eyes and accepted the judgements of those whom he thought were better informed than himself. So he let his friends of the review impose one of their number on him, a great man of a decadent coterie, Stephan von Hellmuth, who brought him an *Iphigenia*. It was at the time when German poets (like their colleagues in France) were recasting all the Greek tragedies. Stephan von Hellmuth's work was one of those astounding Græco-German plays in which Ibsen, Homer. and Oscar Wilde are compounded—and, of course, a few

manuals of archæology. Agamemnon was neurasthenic and Achilles impotent: they lamented their condition at length, and naturally their outcries produced no change. The energy of the drama was concentrated in the rôle of Iphigenia—a nervous, hysterical, and pedantic Iphigenia, who lectured the hero, declaimed furiously, laid bare for the audience her Nietzschean pessimism, and, glutted with death, cut her throat, shrieking with laughter.

Nothing could be more contrary to Christopher's mind than such pretentious, degenerate, Ostrogothic stuff, in Greek dress. It was hailed as a masterpiece by everybody about him. He was cowardly and was overpersuaded. In truth, he was bursting with music and thinking much more of his music than of the text. The text was a new bed into which to let loose the flood of his passions. He was as far as possible from the state of abnegation and intelligent impersonality proper to musical translation of a poetic work. He was thinking only of himself and not at all of the work. He never thought of adapting himself to it. He was under an illusion: he saw in the poem something absolutely different from what was actually in it, just as when he was a child he used to compose in his mind a play entirely different from that which was upon the stage.

It was not until it came to rehearsal that he saw the real play. One day he was listening to a scene, and he thought it so stupid that he fancied the actors must be spoiling it, and went so far as to explain it to them in the poet's presence; but also to explain it to the poet himself, who was defending his interpretation. The author refused bluntly to hear him, and said with some asperity that he thought he knew what he had meant to write. Christopher would not give in, and maintained that Hellmuth knew nothing about it. The general merriment told him that he was making himself ridiculous. He said no more, agreeing that, after all, it was not he who had written the poem. Then he saw the appalling emptiness of the play and was overwhelmed by it: he wondered how he could ever have been persuaded to try it. He called himself an idiot and tore his hair. He tried in vain to reassure himself by saying: "You know nothing about it; it is not your business. Keep to your music." He was so much ashamed of certain idiotic things in it, of the pretentious pathos, the crying falsity of the words.

the gestures and attitudes, that sometimes, when he was conducting the orchestra, he hardly had the strength to raise his bâton. He wanted to go and hide in the prompter's box. He was too frank and too little politic to conceal what he thought. Everyone noticed it: his friends, the actors, and the author. Hellmuth said to him with a frigid smile:

"Is it not fortunate enough to please you?"

Christopher replied honestly:

"Truth to tell, no. I don't understand it."

"Then you did not read it when you set it to music?"

"Yes," said Christopher naïvely, "but I made a mistake. I understood it differently."

"It is a pity you did not write what you understood yourself."

"Oh! If only I could have done so!" said Christopher.

The poet was vexed, and in his turn criticised the music. He complained that it was in the way, and prevented his words being heard.

If the poet did not understand the musician or the musician the poet, the actors understood neither the one nor the other, and did not care. They were only asking for sentences in their parts on which to bring in their usual effects. They had no idea of adapting their declamation to the formality of the piece and the musical rhythm. They went one way, the music another. It was as though they were constantly singing out of tune. Christopher ground his teeth and shouted the note at them until he was hoarse. They let him shout and went on imperturbably, not even understanding what he wanted them to do.

Christopher would have flung the whole thing up if the rehearsals had not been so far advanced, and he had not been bound to go on by fear of legal proceedings. Mannheim, to whom he confided his discouragement, laughed at him:

"What is it?" he asked. "It is all going well. You don't understand each other? What does that matter? Who has ever understood his work but the author? It is a toss-up whether he understands it himself!"

Christopher was worried about the stupidity of the poem, which, he said, would ruin the music. Mannheim made no difficulty about admitting that there was no common sense in the poem, and that Hellmuth was "a muff", but he would not

worry about him: Hellmuth gave good dinners and had a pretty wife. What more did criticism want?

Christopher shrugged his shoulders and said that he had no time to listen to nonsense.

"It is not nonsense!" said Mannheim, laughing. "How serious people are! They have no idea of what matters in life."

And he advised Christopher not to bother so much about Hellmuth's business, but to attend to his own. He wanted him to advertise a little. Christopher refused indignantly. To a reporter who came and asked for a history of his life, he replied furiously:

"It is not your affair!"

And when they asked for his photograph for a magazine, he stamped with rage and shouted that he was not, thank God! an emperor, to have his face passed from hand to hand. It was impossible to bring him into touch with influential people. He never replied to invitations, and when he had been forced by any chance to accept, he would forget to go or would go with such a bad grace that he seemed to have set himself to be disagreeable to everybody.

But the climax came when he quarrelled with his Review, two days before the performance.

The thing was bound to happen. Mannheim had gone on revising Christopher's articles, and he no longer scrupled about deleting whole lines of criticism and replacing them with compliments.

One day, out visiting, Christopher met a certain virtuoso—a foppish pianist whom he had slaughtered. The man came and thanked him with a smile that showed all his white teeth. He replied brutally that there was no reason for it. The other insisted and poured forth expressions of gratitude. Christopher cut him short by saying that if he was satisfied with the article that was his affair, but that the article had certainly not been written with a view to pleasing him. And he turned his back on him. The virtuoso thought him a kindly boor, and went away laughing. But Christopher remembered having received a card of thanks from another of his victims, and a suspicion flashed upon him. He went out, bought the last number of the Review at a news-stand, turned to his article, and read.... At

first he wondered if he were going mad. Then he understood, and, mad with rage, he ran to the office of the *Dionysos*.

Waldhaus and Mannheim were there, talking to an actress whom they knew. They had no need to ask Christopher what brought him. Throwing a number of the Review on the table, Christopher let fly at them without stopping to take breath, with extraordinary violence, shouting, calling them rogues, rascals, forgers, thumping on the floor with a chair. Mannheim began to laugh. Christopher tried to kick him. Mannheim took refuge behind the table and roared with laughter. But Waldhaus took it very loftily. With dignity, formally, he tried to make himself heard through the row, and said that he would not allow anyone to talk to him in such a tone, that Christopher should hear from him, and he held out his card. Christopher flung it in his face.

"Mischief-maker!—I don't need your card to know what you are.... You are a rascal and a forger!... And you think I would fight with you... a thrashing is all you deserve!..."

His voice could be heard in the street. People stopped to listen. Mannheim closed the windows. The actress tried to escape, but Christopher was blocking the way. Waldhaus was pale and choking. Mannheim was stuttering and stammering and trying to reply. Christopher did not let them speak. He let loose upon them every expression he could think of, and never stopped until he was out of breath and had come to an end of his insults. Waldhaus and Mannheim only found their tongues after he had gone. Mannheim quickly recovered himself: insults slipped from him like water from a duck's back. But Waldhaus was still sore: his dignity had been outraged, and what made the affront more mortifying was that there had been witnesses. He would never forgive it. His colleagues joined chorus with him. Mannheim only of the staff of the Review was not angry with Christopher. He had had his fill of entertainment out of him: it did not seem to him a heavy price to pay for his pound of flesh, to suffer a few violent words. It had been a good joke. If he had been the butt of it he would have been the first to laugh. And so he was quite ready to shake hands with Christopher as though nothing had happened. But Christopher was more rancorous and rejected all advances. Mannheim did not care. Christopher was a toy from which he had extracted all the amusement possible. He

was beginning to want a new puppet. From that very day all was over between them. But that did not prevent Mannheim still saying, whenever Christopher was mentioned in his presence, that they were intimate friends. And perhaps he thought they were.

Two days after the quarrel the first performance of *Iphigenia* took place. It was an utter failure. Waldhaus's Review praised the poem and made no mention of the music. The other papers and reviews made merry over it. They laughed and hissed. The piece was withdrawn after the third performance, but the jokes at its expense did not disappear so quickly. People were only too glad of the opportunity of having a fling at Christopher, and for several weeks the *Iphigenia* remained an unfailing subject for joking. They knew that Christopher had no weapon of defence, and they took advantage of it. The only thing which held them back a little was his position at the Court. Although his relation with the Grand Duke had become quite cold, for the Prince had several times made remarks to which he had paid no attention whatever, he still went to the Palace at intervals, and still enjoyed, in the eye of the public, a sort of official protection, though it was more visionary than real. He took upon himself to destroy even that last support.

He suffered from the criticisms. They were concerned not only with his music, but also with his idea of a new form of art, which the writers did not take the trouble to understand. It was very easy to travesty it and make fun of it. Christopher was not yet wise enough to know that the best reply to dishonest critics is to make none and to go on working. For some months past he had fallen into the bad habit of not letting any unjust attack go unanswered. He wrote an article in which he did not spare certain of his adversaries. The two papers to which he took it returned it with ironically polite excuses for being unable to publish it. Christopher stuck to his guns. He remembered that the Socialist paper in the town had made advances to him. He knew one of the editors. They used to meet and talk occasionally. Christopher was glad to find someone who would talk freely about power, the army and oppression and archaic prejudices. But they could not go far with each other, for the Socialist always came back to Karl

Marx, about whom Christopher cared not a rap. Moreover, Christopher used to find in his speeches about the free man —besides a materialism which was much to his taste—a pedantic severity and a despotism of thought, a secret cult of force, an inverse militarism, all of which did not sound very different from what he heard every day in Germany.

However, he thought of this man and his paper when he saw all other doors in journalism closed to him. He knew that his doing so would cause a scandal. The paper was violent, malignant, and always being condemned. But as Christopher never read it, he only thought of the boldness of its ideas, of which he was not afraid, and not of the baseness of its tone, which would have repelled him. Besides, he was so angry at seeing the other papers in alliance to suppress him, that perhaps he would have gone on even if he had been warned. He wanted to show people that he was not so easily got rid of. So he took his article to the Socialist paper, which received it with open arms. The next day the article appeared, and the paper announced in large letters that it had engaged the support of the young and talented maestro, John Christoher Krafft, whose keen sympathy with the demands of the working classes was well known.

Christopher read neither the note nor the article, for he had gone out before dawn for a walk in the country, it being Sunday. He was in fine fettle. As he saw the sun rise he shouted, laughed, yodeled, leaped, and danced. No more review, no more criticisms to do! It was spring, and there was once more the music of the heavens and the earth, the most beautiful of all. No more dark concert rooms, stuffy and smelly, unpleasant people, dull performers. Now the marvellous song of the murmuring forests was to be heard, and over the fields like waves there passed the intoxicating scents of life, breaking through the crust of the earth and issuing from the grave.

He went home with his head buzzing with light and music, and his mother gave him a letter which had been brought from the Palace while he was away. The letter was in an impersonal form, and told Herr Krafft that he was to go to the Palace that morning. The morning was past, it was nearly one o'clock. Christopher was not concerned.

"It is too late now", he said. "It will do tomorrow."

But his mother said anxiously:

"No, no. You cannot put off an appointment with His Highness like that; you must go at once. Perhaps it is a matter of importance."

Christopher shrugged his shoulders.

"Important! As if those people could have anything important to say! . . . He wants to tell me his ideas about music. That will be funny! . . . If only he has not taken it into his head to rival Siegfried Meyer,[1] and wants to show me a *Hymn to Aegis!* I vow that I will not spare him. I shall say: 'Stick to politics. You are master there. You will always be right. But beware of art! In art you are seen without your plumes, your helmet, your uniform, your money, your titles, your ancestors, your policemen—and just think for a moment what will be left of you then!'"

Poor Louisa took him quite seriously and raised her hands in horror.

"You won't say that! . . . You are mad! Mad!"

It amused him to make her uneasy by playing upon her credulity until he became so extravagant that Louisa began to see that he was making fun of her.

"You are stupid, my boy!"

He laughed and kissed her. He was in a wonderfully good humour. On his walk he had found a beautiful musical theme, and he felt it frolicking in him like a fish in water. He refused to go to the Palace until he had had something to eat. He was as hungry as an ogre. Louisa then supervised his dressing, for he was beginning to tease her again, pretending that he was quite all right as he was with his old clothes and dusty boots. But he changed them all the same, and cleaned his boots, whistling like a blackbird and imitating all the instruments in an orchestra. When he had finished his mother inspected him and gravely tied his tie for him again. For once in a way he was very patient, because he was pleased with himself—which was not very usual. He went off saying that he was going to elope with Princess Adelaide—the Grand Duke's daughter, quite a pretty woman, who was married to a German princeling, and had come to stay with her parents for a few weeks. She had shown sympathy for Christopher when he was a child, and he had a soft spot for her. Louisa used to declare that

[1] A nickname given by German pamphleteers to S. M. (Seine Majestät) the Emperor.

he was in love with her, and he would pretend to be so in fun.

He did not hurry; he dawdled and looked into the shops, and stopped to pat some dog that he knew as it lay on its side and yawned in the sun. He jumped over the harmless railings which enclosed the Palace square—a great empty square, surrounded with houses, with two little fountains, two symmetrical bare flower-beds, divided, as by a parting, by a gravel path, carefully raked and bordered by orange trees in tubs. In the middle was the bronze statue of some unknown Grand Duke in the costume of Louis Philippe, on a pediment adorned at the four corners by allegorical figures representing the Virtues. On a seat one solitary man was dozing over his paper. Behind the silly moat of the earthworks of the Palace two sleepy cannon yawned upon the sleepy town. Christopher laughed at the whole thing.

He entered the Palace without troubling to assume a more official manner. At most he stopped humming, but his thoughts went dancing on inside him. He threw his hat on the table in the hall, and familiarily greeted the old usher, whom he had known since he was a child. (The old man had been there on the day when Christopher had first entered the Palace, on the evening when he had seen Hassler.) But today the old man, who always used to reply good-humouredly to Christopher's disrespectful sallies, seemed a little haughty. Christopher paid no heed to it. A little farther on, in the ante-chamber, he met a clerk of the chancery, who was usually full of conversation and very friendly. He was surprised to see him hurry past him to avoid having to talk. However, he did not attach any significance to it, and went on and asked to be shown in.

He went in. They had just finished dinner. His Highness was in one of the drawing-rooms. He was leaning against the mantelpiece, smoking, and talking to his guests, among whom Christopher saw *his* princess, who was also smoking. She was lying back in an armchair and talking in a loud voice to some officers who made a circle about her. The gathering was lively. They were all very merry, and when Christopher entered, he heard the Grand Duke's thick laugh. But he stopped dead when he saw Christopher. He growled and pounced on him.

"Ah! There you are!" he said. "You have condescended to

come at last? Do you think you can go on making fun of me any longer? You're a blackguard, sir!"

Christopher was so staggered by this brutal attack, that it was some time before he could utter a word. He was thinking that he was only late, and that that could not have provoked such violence. He murmured:

"What have I done, Your Highness?"

His Highness did not listen and went on angrily:

"Be silent! I will not be insulted by a blackguard!" Christopher turned pale, and gulped so as to try to speak, for he was choking. He made an effort, and said:

"Your Highness, you have no right—you have no right to insult me without telling me what I have done."

The Grand Duke turned to his secretary, who produced a paper from his pocket and held it out to him. He was in such a state of exasperation as could not be explained only by his anger: the fumes of good wine had their share in it, too. He came and stood in front of Christopher, and like a matador with his cape, furiously waved the crumpled newspaper in his face and shouted:

"Your muck, sir! . . . You deserve to have your nose rubbed in it!"

Christopher recognised the Sozialist paper.

"I don't see what harm there is in it," he said.

"What! What!" screamed the Grand Duke. "You are impudent! . . . This rascally paper, which insults me from day to day, and spews out filthy insults upon me! . . ."

"Sire," said Christopher, "I have not read it."

"You lie!" shouted the Grand Duke.

"You shall not call me a liar," said Christopher. "I have not read it. I am only concerned with reviews, and besides, I have the right to write in whatever paper I like."

"You have no right but to hold your tongue. I have been too kind to you. I have heaped kindness upon you, you and yours, in spite of your misconduct and your father's, which would have justified me in cutting you off. I forbid you to go on writing in a paper which is hostile to me. And further: I forbid you altogether to write anything in future without my authority. I have had enough of your musical polemics. I will not allow anyone who enjoys my patronage to spend his time in attacking everything which is dear to people of taste and

feeling, to all true Germans. You would do better to write better music, or, if that is impossible, to practise your scales and exercises. I don't want to have anything to do with a musical Bebel who amuses himself by decrying all our national glories and upsetting the minds of the people. We know what is good, thank God. Wo do not need to wait for you to tell us. Go to your piano, sir, or leave us in peace!"

Standing face to face with Christopher the fat man glared at him insultingly. Christopher was livid, and tried to speak. His lips moved; he stammered:

"I am not your slave. I shall say what I like and write what I like . . ."

He choked. He was almost weeping with shame and rage. His legs were trembling. He jerked his elbow and upset an ornament on a table by his side. He felt that he was in a ridiculous position. He heard people laughing. He looked down the room, and as through a mist saw the princess watching the scene and exchanging ironically commiserating remarks with her neighbours. He lost count of what exactly happened. The Grand Duke shouted. Christopher shouted louder than he without knowing what he said. The Prince's secretary and another official came towards him and tried to stop him. He pushed them away, and while he talked he waved an ashtray which he had mechanically picked up from the table against which he was leaning. He heard the secretary say:

"Put it down! Put it down!"

And he heard himself shouting inarticulately and knocking on the edge of the table with the ashtray.

"Go!" roared the Grand Duke, beside himself with rage. "Go! Go! I'll have you thrown out!"

The officers had come up to the Prince and were trying to calm him. The Grand Duke looked apoplectic. His eyes were starting from his head, he shouted to them to throw the rascal out. Christopher saw red. He longed to thrust his fist in the Grand Duke's face; but he was crushed under a weight of conflicting feelings: shame, fury, a remnant of shyness, of German loyalty, traditional respect, habits of humility in the Prince's presence. He tried to speak; he could not. He tried to move; he could not. He could not see or hear. He suffered them to push him along and left the room.

He passed through the impassive servants who had come up

to the door, and had missed nothing of the quarrel. He had to go thirty yards to cross the ante-chamber, and it seemed a lifetime. The corridor grew longer and longer as he walked up it. He would never get out! . . . The light of day which he saw shining downstairs through the glass door was his haven. He went stumbling down the stairs. He forgot that he was bare-headed. The old usher reminded him to take his hat. He had to gather all his forces to leave the castle, cross the court, reach his home. His teeth were chattering when he opened the door. His mother was terrified by his face and his trembling. He avoided her and refused to answer her questions. He went up to his room, shut himself in, and lay down. He was shaking so that he could not undress. His breathing came in jerks and his whole body seemed shattered. . . . Oh! If only he could see no more, feel no more, no longer have to bear with his wretched body, no longer have to struggle against ignoble life, and fall, fall, breathless, without thought, and no longer be anywhere! . . . With frightful difficulty he tore off his clothes and left them on the ground, and then flung himself into his bed and drew the coverings over him. There was no sound in the room save that of the little iron bed rattling on the tiled floor.

Louisa listened at the door. She knocked in vain. She called softly. There was no reply. She waited, anxiously listening through the silence. Then she went away. Once or twice during the day she came and listened, and again at night, before she went to bed. Day passed, and the night. The house was still. Christopher was shaking with fever. Every now and then he wept, and in the night he got up several times and shook his fist at the wall. About two o'clock, in an access of madness, he got up from his bed, sweating and half naked. He wanted to go and kill the Grand Duke. He was devoured by hate and shame. His body and his heart writhed in the fire of it. Nothing of all the storm in him could be heard outside; not a word, not a sound. With clenched teeth he fought it down and forced it back into himself.

Next morning he came down as usual. He was a wreck. He said nothing and his mother dared not question him. She knew, from the gossip of the neighbourhood. All day he stayed sitting by the fire, silent, feverish, and with bent

head, like a little old man. And when he was alone he wept in silence.

In the evening the editor of the Socialist paper came to see him. Naturally he had heard and wished to have details, Christopher was touched by his coming, and interpreted it naïvely as a mark of sympathy and a desire for forgiveness on the part of those who had compromised him. He made a point of seeming to regret nothing, and he let himself go, and said everything that was rankling in him. It was some solace for him to talk freely to a man who shared his hatred of oppression. The other urged him on. He saw a good chance for his journal in the event, and an opportunity for a scandalous article, for which he expected Christopher to provide him with material, if he did not write it himself; for he thought that after such an explosion the Court musician would put his very considerable polemical talents and his no less considerable little tit-bits of secret information about the Court at the service of "the cause". As he did not plume himself on his subtlety, he presented the thing rawly in the crudest light. Christopher started. He declared that he would write nothing, and said that any attack on the Grand Duke that he might make would be interpreted as an act of personal vengeance, and that he would be more reserved now that he was free than when, not being free, he ran some risk in saying what he thought. The journalist could not understand his scruples. He thought Christopher narrow and clerical at heart, but he also decided that Christopher was afraid. He said:

"Oh, well! Leave it to us. I will write it myself. You need not bother about it."

Christopher begged him to say nothing, but he had no means of restraining him. Besides, the journalist declared that the affair was not his concern only: the insult touched the paper, which had the right to avenge itself. There was nothing to be said to that. All that Christopher could do was to ask him on his word of honour not to abuse certain of his confidences which had been made to the friend, and not to the journalist. The other made no difficulty about that. Christopher was not reassured by it. He knew too well how imprudent he had been. When he was left alone he turned over everything that he had said, and shuddered. Without hesitating for a moment, he wrote to the journalist imploring him once more not to repeat

what he had confided to him. (The poor wretch repeated it in part himself in the letter.)

Next day, as he opened the paper with feverish haste, the first thing he read was his story at great length on the front page. Everything that he had said on the evening before was immeasurably enlarged, having suffered that peculiar deformation which everything has to suffer in its passage through the mind of a journalist. The article attacked the Grand Duke and the Court with low invective. Certain details which it gave were too personal to Christopher, too obviously known only to him, for the article not to be attributed to him in its entirety.

Christopher was crushed by this fresh blow. As he read a cold sweat came out on his face. When he had finished he was dumbfounded. He wanted to rush to the office of the paper, but his mother withheld him, not unreasonably being fearful of his violence. He was afraid of it himself. He felt that if he went there he would do something foolish; and he stayed—and did a very foolish thing. He wrote an indignant letter to the journalist in which he reproached him for his conduct in insulting terms, disclaimed the article, and broke with the party. The disclaimer did not appear.

Christopher wrote again to the paper, demanding that his letter should be published. They sent him a copy of his first letter, written on the night of the interview and confirming it. They asked if they were to publish that, too. He felt that he was in their hands. Thereupon he unfortunately met the indiscreet interviewer in the street. He could not help telling him of his contempt for him. Next day the paper, without a spark of shame, published an insulting paragraph about the servants of the Court, who even when they are dismissed, remain servants, and are incapable of being free. A few allusions to recent events left no room for doubt that Christopher was meant.

When it became evident to everybody that Christopher had no single support, there suddenly cropped up a host of enemies whose existence he had never suspected. All those whom he had offended, directly or indirectly, either by personal criticism or by attacking their ideas and taste, now took the offensive and avenged themselves with interest. The general public

whom Christopher had tried to shake out of their apathy were quite pleased to see the insolent young man, who had presumed to reform opinion and disturb the rest of people of property, taken down a peg. Christopher was in the water. Everybody did their best to duck him.

They did not come down upon him all at once. One tried first, to spy out the land. Christopher made no response, and he struck more lustily. Others followed, and then the whole gang of them. Some joined in the sport simply for fun, like puppies who think it funny to leave their mark in inappropriate places. They were the flying squadron of incompetent journalists, who, knowing nothing, try to hide their ignorance by belauding the victors and belabouring the vanquished. Others brought the weight of their principles and they shouted like deaf people. Nothing was left of anything when they had passed. They were the critics—with the criticism which kills.

Fortunately for Christopher, he did not read the papers. A few devoted friends took care to send him the most insulting. But he left them in a heap on his desk, and never thought of opening them. It was only towards the end of it that his eyes were attracted by a great red mark round an article. He read that his *Lieder* were like the roaring of a wild beast; that his symphonies seemed to have come from a madhouse; that his art was hysterical, his harmony spasmodic, as a change from the dryness of his heart and the emptiness of his thought. The critic, who was well known, ended with these words:

"Herr Krafft as a journalist has lately given astounding proof of his style and taste, which roused irresistible merriment in musical circles. He was then given the friendly advice rather to devote himself to composition. But the latest products of his muse have shown that this advice, though well-meant, was bad. Herr Krafft should certainly devote himself to journalism."

After reading the article, which prevented Christopher working the whole morning, naturally he began to read the other hostile papers, and became utterly demoralised. But Louisa, who had a mania for moving everything lying about, by way of "tidying up", had already burned them. He was irritated at first, and then comforted, and he held out the last of the papers to her, and said that she had better do the same with them.

Other rebuffs hurt him more. A quartette which he had sent in manuscript to a well-known society at Frankfurt was rejected unanimously and returned without explanation. An overture which an orchestra at Cologne seemed disposed to perform was returned after a month as unplayable. But the worst of all was inflicted on him by an orchestral society in the town. The *Kapellmeister*, H. Euphrat, its conductor, was quite a good musician, but, like many conductors, he had no curiosity of mind. He suffered (or rather he carried to extremes) the laziness peculiar to his class, which consists in going on and on investigating familiar works, while it shuns any really new work like the plague. He was never tired of organising Beethoven, Mozart, or Schumann festivals: in conducting these works he had only to let himself be carried along by the purring of the familiar rhythms. On the other hand, contemporary music was intolerable to him. He dared not admit it, and pretended to be friendly towards young talent; in fact, whenever he was brought a work built on the old lines—a sort of hotch-potch of works that had been new fifty years before—he would receive it very well, and would even produce it ostentatiously and force it upon the public. It did not disturb either his effects or the way in which the public was accustomed to be moved. On the other hand, he was filled with a mixture of contempt and hatred for anything which threatened to disturb that arrangement and put him to extra trouble. Contempt would predominate if the innovator had no chance of emerging from obscurity. But if there were any danger of his succeeding, then hatred would predominate—of course, until the moment when he had gained an established success.

Christopher was not yet in that position: far from it. And so he was much surprised when he was informed, by indirect overtures, that Herr H. Euphrat would be very glad to produce one of his compositions. It was all the more unexpected as he knew that the *Kapellmeister* was an intimate friend of Brahms and others whom he had maltreated in his criticisms. Being honest himself, he credited his adversaries with the same generous feelings which he would have had himself. He supposed that now that he was down they wished to show him that they were above petty spite. He was touched by it. He wrote effusively to Herr Euphrat and sent him a symphonic

poem. The conductor replied through his secretary coldly, but politely, acknowledging the receipt of his work, and adding that, in accordance with the rules of the society, the symphony would be given out to the orchestra immediately, and put to the test of a general rehearsal before it could be accepted for public hearing. A rule is a rule. Christopher had to bow to it, though it was a pure formality which served to weed out the lucubrations of amateurs which were sometimes a nuisance.

A few weeks later Christopher was told that his composition was to be rehearsed. On principle everything was done privately, and even the author was not permitted to be present at the rehearsal. But by a generally agreed indulgence the author was always admitted; only he did not show himself. Everybody knew it, and everybody pretended not to know it. On the appointed day one of his friends brought Christopher to the hall, where he sat at the back of a box. He was surprised to see that at this private rehearsal the hall—at least the ground floor seats—were almost all filled; a crowd of dilettante idlers and critics moved about and chattered to each other. The orchestra had to ignore their presence.

They began with the Brahms *Rhapsody*, for alto chorus of male voices, and orchestra, on a fragment of the *Harzreise im Winter* of Goethe. Christopher, who detested the majestic sentimentality of the work, thought that perhaps the "Brahmins" had introduced it politely to avenge themselves by forcing him to hear a composition of which he had written irreverently. The idea made him laugh, and his good humour increased when, after the *Rhapsody* there came two other productions by known musicians whom he had taken to task; there seemed to be no doubt about their intentions. And while he could not help making a face at it, he thought that, after all, it was quite fair tactics; and, failing the music, he appreciated the joke. It even amused him to applaud ironically with the audience, which made manifest its enthusiasm for Brahms and his like.

At last it came to Christopher's symphony. He saw from the way the orchestra and the people in the hall were looking at his box that they were aware of his presence. He hid himself. He waited with the catch at his heart which every musician feels at the moment when the conductor's wand is raised and the waters of the music gather in silence before bursting their

dam. He had never yet heard his work played. How would the creatures of his dreams live? How would their voices sound? He felt their roaring within him; and he leaned over the abyss of sounds, waiting fearfully for what should come forth.

What did come forth was a nameless thing, a shapeless hotch-potch. Instead of the bold columns which were to support the front of the building the chords came crumbling down like a building in ruins; there was nothing to be seen but the dust of mortar. For a moment Christopher was not quite sure whether they were really playing his work. He cast back for the train, the rhythm of his thoughts; he could not recognise it; it went on babbling and hiccoughing like a drunken man clinging close to the wall, and he was overcome with shame, as though he had himself been seen in that condition. It was of no avail to think that he had not written such stuff; when an idiotic interpreter destroys a man's thoughts he has always a moment of doubt when he asks himself in consternation if he is himself responsible for it. The audience never asks such a question: the audience believes in the interpreter, in the singers, in the orchestra whom they are accustomed to hear as they believe in their newspaper; they cannot make a mistake; if they say absurd things, it is the absurdity of the author. This audience was the less inclined to doubt because it liked to believe. Christopher tried to persuade himself that the *Kapellmeister* was aware of the hash, and would stop the orchestra and begin again. The instruments were not playing together. The horn had missed his beat and had come in a bar too late; he went on for a few minutes, and then stopped quietly to clean his instrument. Certain passages for the oboe had absolutely disappeared. It was impossible for the most skilled ear to pick up the thread of the musical idea, or even to imagine that there was one. Fantastic instrumentation, humouristic sallies became grotesque through the crassness of the execution. It was lamentably stupid, the work of an idiot, of a clown who knew nothing of music. Christopher tore his hair. He tried to interrupt, but the friend who was with him held him back, assuring him that *Herr Kapellmeister* must surely see the faults of the execution and would put everything right—that Christopher must not show himself, and that if he made any remark, it would have a very bad effect. He made Christopher sit at the very back of the box. Christopher

obeyed, but he beat his head with his fists; and every fresh monstrosity drew from him a groan of indignation and misery.

"The wretches! The wretches! . . ."

He groaned, and squeezed his hands tight to keep himself from crying out.

Now mingled with the wrong notes there came up to him the muttering of the audience, who were beginning to be restless. At first it was only a tremor; but soon Christopher was left without a doubt; they were laughing. The musicians of the orchestra had given the signal; some of them did not conceal their hilarity. The audience, certain then that the music was laughable, rocked with laughter. The merriment became general; it increased at the return of a very rhythmical motif which the double-basses accentuated in a burlesque fashion. Only the *Kapellmeister* went on through the uproar imperturbably beating time.

At last they reached the end (the best things come to an end). It was the turn of the audience. They exploded with delight, an explosion which lasted for several minutes. Some hissed; others applauded ironically; the wittiest of all shouted "Encore!" A bass voice coming from the stage box began to imitate the grotesque motif. Other jokers followed suit and imitated it also. Someone shouted "Author!" It was long since these witty folk had been so highly entertained.

When the tumult was calmed down a little, the *Kapellmeister*, standing quite impassive with his face turned towards the audience, though he was pretending not to see it (the audience was still supposed to be nonexistent) made a sign that he was about to speak. There was a cry of "'Ssh," and silence. He waited a moment longer; then (his voice was curt, cold, and cutting):

"Gentlemen," he said, "I should certainly not have let *that* be played through to the end if I had not wished to make an example of the gentleman who has dared to write offensively of the great Brahms."

That was all; and jumping down from his stand, he went out amid cheers from the delighted audience. They tried to recall him; the applause went on for a few minutes longer. But he did not return. The orchestra went away. The audience decided to go too. The concert was over.

It had been a good day.

Christopher had gone already. Hardly had he seen the wretched conductor leave his desk than he had rushed from the box; he plunged down the stairs from the first floor to meet him and slap his face. His friend who had brought him followed and tried to hold him back, but Christopher brushed him aside and almost threw him downstairs (he had reason to believe that the fellow was concerned in the trick which had been played on him). Fortunately for H. Euphrat and himself the door leading to the stage was shut; and his furious knocking could not make them open it. However, the audience was beginning to leave the hall. Christopher could not stay there. He fled.

He was in an indescribable condition. He walked blindly, waving his arms, rolling his eyes, talking aloud like a madman; he suppressed his cries of indignation and rage. The street was almost empty. The concert hall had been built the year before in a new neighbourhood a little way out of the town; and Christopher instinctively fled towards the country across the empty fields in which were a few lonely shanties and scaffoldings surrounded by fences. His thoughts were murderous; he could have killed the man who had put such an affront upon him. Alas! and when he had killed him, would there be any change in the animosity of those people whose insulting laughter was still ringing in his ears? They were too many; he could do nothing against them; they were all agreed —they who were divided about so many things—to insult and crush him. It was past understanding; there was hatred in them. What had he done to them all? There were beautiful things in him, things to do good and make the heart big; he had tried to say them, to make others enjoy them; he thought they would be happy like himself. Even if they did not like them they should be grateful to him for his intentions; they could, if need be, show him kindly where he had been wrong; but that they should take such a malignant joy in insulting and odiously travestying his ideas, in trampling them underfoot, and killing him by ridicule, how was it possible? In his excitement he exaggerated their hatred: he thought it much more serious than such mediocre people could ever be. He sobbed: "What have I done to them?" He choked, he thought that all was lost, just as he did when he was a child coming into contact for the first time with human wickedness.

And when he looked about him he suddenly saw that he had reached the edge of the mill-race, at the very spot where a few years before his father had been drowned. And at once he thought of drowning himself too. He was just at the point of making the plunge.

But as he leaned over the steep bank, fascinated by the calm clean aspect of the water, a tiny bird in a tree by his side began to sing—to sing madly. He held his breath to listen. The water murmured. The ripening corn moaned as it waved under the soft caressing wind; the poplars shivered. Behind the hedge on the road, out of sight, bees in hives in a garden filled the air with their scented music. From the other side of the stream a cow was chewing the cud and gazing with soft eyes. A little fair-haired girl was sitting on a wall, with a light basket on her shoulders, like a little angel with wings and she was dreaming, and swinging her bare legs and humming aimlessly. Far away in a meadow a white dog was leaping and running in wide circles. Christopher leaned against a tree and listened and watched the earth in Spring; he was caught up by the peace and joy of these creatures; he could forget, he could forget. Suddenly he clasped the tree with his arms and rested his cheek against it. He threw himself on the ground; he buried his face in the grass; he laughed nervously, happily. All the beauty, the grace, the charm of life wrapped him round, imbued his soul, and he sucked them up like a sponge. He thought:

"Why are you so beautiful, and they—men—so ugly?"

No matter! He loved it, he loved it, he felt that he would always love it, and that nothing could ever take it from him. He held the earth to his breast. He held life to his breast:

"I love you! You are mine. They cannot take you from me. Let them do what they will! Let them make me suffer! . . . Suffering also is life!"

Christopher began bravely to work again. He refused to have anything more to do with "men of letters"—well named—makers of phrases, the sterile babblers, journalists, critics, the exploiters and traffickers of art. As for musicians, he would waste no more time in battling with their prejudices and jealousy. They did not want him? Very well! He did not want them. He had his work to do; he would do it. The Court had

given him back his liberty; he was grateful for it. He was grateful to the people for their hostility; he could work in peace.

Louisa approved with all her heart. She had no ambition; she was not a Krafft; she was like neither his father nor his grandfather. She did not want honours or reputation for her son. She would have liked him to be rich and famous; but if those advantages could only be bought at the price of so much unpleasantness, she much preferred not to bother about them. She had been more upset by Christopher's grief over his rupture with the Palace than by the event itself; and she was heartily glad that he had quarrelled with the Review and newspaper people. She had a peasant's distrust of blackened paper; it was only a waste of time and made enemies. She had sometimes heard his young friends of the Review talking to Christopher; she had been horrified by their malevolence; they tore everything to pieces, and said horrible things about everybody; and the worse things they said the better pleased they were. She did not like them. No doubt they were very clever and very learned, but they were not kind, and she was very glad that Christopher saw no more of them. She was full of common sense: what good were they to him?

"They may say, write, and think what they like of me," said Christopher. "They cannot prevent my being myself. What do their ideas or their art matter to me? I deny them!"

It is all very fine to deny the world. But the world is not so easily denied by a young man's arrogance. Christopher was sincere, but he was under an illusion; he did not know himself. He was not a monk; he had not the temperament for renouncing the world, and besides, he was not old enough to do so. At first he did not suffer much, he was absorbed in composition; and while his work lasted he did not feel the want of anything. But when he came to the period of depression which follows the completion of a work and lasts until a new work takes possession of the mind, he looked about him and was horrified by his loneliness. He asked himself why he wrote. While a man is writing he never asks himself that question; he must write, there is no arguing about it. And then he finds himself with the work that he has begotten: the great instinct which caused it to spring forth is silent; he does not understand why

it was born: he hardly recognises it, it is almost a stranger to him; he longs to forget it. And that is impossible as long as it is not published or played, or living its own life in the world. Till then it is like a new-born child attached to its mother, a living thing bound fast to his living flesh; it must be amputated at all costs, or it will not live. The more Christopher composed the more he suffered under the weight of these creatures who had sprung forth from himself and could neither live nor die. He was haunted by them. Who could deliver him from them? Some obscure impulse would stir in these children of his thoughts; they longed desperately to break away from him, to expand into other souls like the quick and fruitful seed which the wind scatters over the universe. Must he remain imprisoned in his sterility? He raged against it.

Since every outlet—theatres, concerts—was closed to him, and nothing would induce him to approach those managers who had once failed him, there was nothing left but for him to publish his writings, but he could not flatter himself that it would be easier to find a publisher to produce his work than an orchestra to play it. The two or three clumsy attempts that he had made were enough; rather than expose himself to another rebuff, or to bargain with one of these music merchants and put up with his patronising airs he preferred to publish at his own expense. It was an act of madness; he had some small savings out of his Court salary and the proceeds of a few concerts, but the source from which the money had come was dried up, and it would be a long time before he could find another; and he should have been prudent enough to be careful with his scanty funds which had to help him over the difficult period upon which he was entering. Not only did he not do so; but, as his savings were not enough to cover the expenses of publication, he did not shrink from getting into debt. Louisa dared not say anything; she found him absolutely unreasonable, and did not understand how anybody could spend money for the sake of seeing his name on a book; but since it was a way of making him be patient and of keeping him with her, she was only too happy for him to have that satisfaction.

Instead of offering the public compositions of a familiar and undisturbing kind, in which it could feel at home, Christopher chose from among his manuscripts a suite very individual in

character, which he valued highly. They were piano pieces mixed with *Lieder*, some very short and popular in style, others very elaborate and almost dramatic. The whole formed a series of impressions, joyous or sad, linked together naturally and written alternately for the piano and the voice, alone or accompanied. "For," said Christopher, "when I dream, I do not always formulate what I feel. I suffer, I am happy, and have no words to say; but then comes a moment when I must say what I am feeling, and I sing without thinking of what I am doing; sometimes I sing only vague words, a few disconnected phrases, sometimes whole poems; then I begin to dream again. And so the day goes by; and I have tried to give the impression of a day. Why these gathered impressions composed only of songs or preludes? There is nothing more false or less harmonious. One must try to give the free play of the soul." He had called his suite: *A Day*. The different parts of the composition bore sub-titles, shortly indicating the succession of his inward dreams. Christopher had written mysterious dedications, initials, dates, which only he could understand, as they reminded him of poetic moments or beloved faces; the gay Corinne, the languishing Sabine, and the little unknown Frenchwoman.

Besides this work he selected thirty of his *Lieder*—those which pleased him most, and consequently pleased the public least. He avoided choosing the most "melodious" of his melodies, but he did choose the most characteristic. (The public always has a horror of anything "characteristic". Characterless things are more likely to please them.)

These *Lieder* were written to poems of old Silesian poets of the seventeenth century that Christopher had read by chance in a popular collection, and whose loyalty he had loved. Two especially were dear to him, dear as brothers, two creatures full of genius and both had died at thirty: the charming Paul Fleming, the traveller to the Caucasus and to Isfahan, who preserved his soul pure, loving and serene in the midst of the savagery of war, the sorrows of life, and the corruption of his time, and Johann Christian Günther, the unbalanced genius who wore himself out in debauchery and despair, casting his life to the four winds. He had translated Günther's cries of provocation and vengeful irony against the hostile God who overwhelms His creatures, his furious curses like those of a

Titan overthrown hurling the thunder back against the heavens. He had selected Fleming's love songs to Anemone and Basilene, soft and sweet as flowers, and the rondo of the stars, the *Tanzlied* (dancing song) of hearts glad and limpid—and the calm heroic sonnet "To Himself" (*An Sich*), which Christopher used to recite as a prayer every morning.

The smiling optimism of the pious Paul Gerhardt also had its charm for Christopher. It was a rest for him on recovering from his own sorrows. He loved that innocent vision of nature as God, the fresh meadows, where the storks walk gravely among the tulips and white narcissus by little brooks singing on the sands, the transparent air through which pass the wide-winged swallows and flying doves, the gaiety of a sunbeam piercing the rain, and the luminous sky smiling through the clouds, and the serene majesty of the evening, the sweet peace of the forests, the cattle, the bowers and the fields. He had had the impertinence to set to music several of those mystic canticles which are still sung in Protestant communities. And he had avoided preserving their choral character. Far from it: he had a horror of it; he had given them a free and vivacious character. Old Gerhardt would have shuddered at the devilish pride which was breathed forth now in certain lines of his *Song of the Christian Traveller*, or the pagan delight which made the peaceful stream of his *Song of Summer* bubble over like a torrent.

The collection was published without any regard for common sense, of course. The publisher whom Christopher paid for printing and storing his *Lieder* had no other claim to his choice than that of being his neighbour. He was not equipped for such important work; the printing went on for months; there were mistakes and expensive corrections. Christopher knew nothing about it, and the whole thing cost more by a third than it need have done; the expenses far exceeded anything he had anticipated. Then, when it was done, Christopher found an enormous edition on his hands and did not know what to do with it. The publisher had no customers; he took no steps to circulate the work. And his apathy was quite in accord with Christopher's attitude. When he asked him, to satisfy his conscience, to write him a short advertisement of it, Christopher replied that "*he* did not want any advertisement; if his music was good it would speak for itself." The

publisher religiously respected his wishes; he put the edition away in his warehouse. It was well kept; for in six months not a copy was sold.

While he was waiting for the public to make up its mind, Christopher had to find some way of repairing the hole he had made in his means; and he could not be nice about it, for he had to live and pay his debts. Not only were his debts larger than he had imagined, but he saw that the money on which he had counted was less than he had thought. Had he lost money without knowing it or—what was infinitely more probable—had he reckoned up wrongly? (He had never been able to add correctly.) It did not matter much why the money was missing; it was missing without a doubt. Louisa had to give her all to help her son. He was bitterly remorseful, and tried to pay her back as soon as possible and at all costs. He tried to get lessons, though it was painful to him to ask and to put up with refusals. He was out of favour altogether; he found it very difficult to obtain pupils again. And so when it was suggested that he should teach at a school he was only too glad.

It was a semi-religious institution. The director, an astute gentleman, had seen, though he was no musician, how useful Christopher might be, and how cheap in his present position. He was pleasant and paid very little. When Christopher ventured to make a timid remark, the director told him with a kindly smile that as he no longer held an official position he could not very well expect more.

It was a sad task! It was not so much a matter of teaching the pupils music as of making their parents and themselves believe that they had learned it. The chief thing was to make them able to sing at the ceremonies to which the public were admitted. It did not matter how it was done. Christopher was in despair; he had not even the consolation of telling himself as he fulfilled his task that he was doing useful work; his conscience reproached him with it as hypocrisy. He tried to give the children more solid instruction, and to make them acquainted with and love serious music; but they did not care for it a bit. Christopher could not succeed in making them listen to it; he had no authority over them; in truth he was not made for teaching children. He took no interest in their

floundering; he tried to explain to them all at once the theory of music. When he had to give a piano lesson he would set his pupil a symphony of Beethoven which he would play as a duet with her. Naturally that could not succeed; he would explode angrily, drive the pupil from the piano, and go on playing alone for a long time. He was just the same with his private pupils outside the school. He had not an ounce of patience; for instance, he would tell a young lady who prided herself on her aristocratic appearance and position, that she played like a kitchen maid; or he would even write to her mother and say that he gave it up, that it would kill him if he went on long bothering about a girl so devoid of talent. All of which did not improve his position. His few pupils left him; he could not keep any of them more than a few months. His mother argued with him; he would argue with himself. Louisa made him promise that at least he would not break with the school he had joined; for if he lost that position he did not know what he should do for a living. And so he restrained himself in spite of his disgust; he was most exemplarily punctual. But how could he conceal his thoughts when a donkey of a pupil blundered for the tenth time in some passage, or when he had to coach his class for the next concert in some foolish chorus! (For he was not even allowed to choose his programme: his taste was not trusted.) He was not exactly zealous about it all. And yet he went stubbornly on, silent, frowning, only betraying his secret wrath by occasionally thumping on his desk and making his pupils jump in their seats. But sometimes the pill was too bitter; he could not bear it any longer. In the middle of the chorus he would interrupt the singers:

"Oh! Stop! Stop! I'll play you some Wagner instead."

They asked nothing better. They played cards behind his back. There was always someone who reported the matter to the director; and Christopher would be reminded that he was not there to make his pupils like music but to make them sing. He received his scoldings with a shudder; but he accepted them; he did not want to lose his work. Who would have thought a few years before, when his career looked so assured and brilliant (when he had done nothing), that he would be reduced to such humiliation just as he was beginning to be worth something?

Among the hurts to his vanity that he came by in his work at the school, one of the most painful was having to call on his colleagues. He paid two calls at random; and they bored him so that he had not the heart to go on. The two privileged persons were not at all pleased about it, but the others were personally affronted. They all regarded Christopher as their inferior in position and intelligence; and they assumed a patronising manner towards him. Sometimes he was overwhelmed by it, for they seemed to be so sure of themselves and the opinion they had of him that he began to share it; he felt stupid with them; what could he have found to say to them? They were full of their profession and saw nothing beyond it. They were not men. If only they had been books! But they were only notes to books, philological commentaries.

Christopher avoided meeting them. But sometimes he was forced to do so. The director was at home once a month in the afternoon; and he insisted on all his people being there. Christopher, who had cut the first afternoon, without excuse, in the vain hope that his absence would not be noticed, was ever afterwards the object of sour attention. Next time he was lectured by his mother and decided to go; he was as solemn about it as though he were going to a funeral.

He found himself at a gathering of the teachers of the school and other institutions of the town, and their wives and daughters. They were all huddled together in a room too small for them, and grouped hierarchically. They paid no attention to him. The group nearest him was talking of pedagogy and cooking. All the wives of the teachers had culinary recipes which they set out with pedantic exuberance and insistence. The men were no less interested in these matters and hardly less competent. They were as proud of the domestic talents of their wives as they of their husbands' learning. Christopher stood by a window leaning against the wall, not knowing how to look, now trying to smile stupidly, now gloomy with a fixed stare and unmoved features, and he was bored to death. A little away from him, sitting in the recess of the window, was a young woman to whom nobody was talking, and she was as bored as he. They both looked at the room and not at each other. It was only after some time that they noticed each other just as they both turned away to yawn, both being at the limit of endurance. Just at that moment their eyes met.

They exchanged a look of friendly understanding. He moved towards her. She said in a low voice:

"Are you amused?"

He turned his back on the room, and, looking out of the window, put out his tongue. She burst out laughing, and suddenly waking up she signed to him to sit down by her side. They introduced themselves; she was the wife of Professor Reinhart, who lectured on natural history at the school, and was newly come to the town, where they knew nobody. She was not beautiful; she had a large nose, ugly teeth, and she lacked freshness; but she had keen, clever eyes, and a kindly smile. She chattered like a magpie; he answered her solemnly; she had an amusing frankness and a droll wit; they laughingly exchanged impressions out loud without bothering about the people round them. Their neighbours, who had not deigned to notice their existence when it would have been charitable to help them out of their loneliness, now threw angry looks at them; it was in bad taste to be so much amused. But they did not care what the others might think of them; they were taking their revenge in their chatter.

In the end Frau Reinhart introduced her husband to Christopher. He was extremely ugly; he had a pale, greasy, pock-marked, rather sinister face, but he looked very kind. He spoke low down in his throat, and pronounced his words sententiously, stammeringly, pausing between each syllable.

They had been married a few months only and these two plain people were in love with each other; they had an affectionate way of looking at each other, talking to each other, taking each other's hands in the presence of everybody—which was comic and touching. If one wanted anything, the other would want it too. And so they invited Christopher to go and eat with them after the reception. Christopher began jokingly to beg to be excused; he said that the best thing to do that evening would be to go to bed; he was quite worn out with boredom, as tired as though he had walked ten miles. But Frau Reinhart said that he could not be left in that condition; it would be dangerous to spend the night with such gloomy thoughts. Christopher let them drag him off. In his loneliness he was glad to have met these good people, who were not very distinguished in their manners, but were simple and *gemütlich*.

The Reinharts' little house was *gemütlich* like themselves. It was a rather chattering *Gemüt*, a *Gemüt* with inscriptions. The furniture, the utensils, the china all talked, and went on repeating their joy in seeing their "charming guest", asked after his health, and gave him pleasant and virtuous advice. On the sofa—which was very hard—was a little cushion which murmured amiably:

"Only a quarter of an hour!" (*Nur ein Viertelstündchen.*)

The cup of coffee which was handed to Christopher insisted on his taking more:

"Just a drop!" (*Noch ein Schlückchen.*)

The plates seasoned the cooking with morality and otherwise the cooking was quite excellent.

One plate said:

"Think of everything: otherwise no good will come to you!"

Another:

"Affection and gratitude please everybody. Ingratitude pleases nobody."

Although Christopher did not smoke, the ashtray on the mantelpiece insisted on introducing itself to him:

"A little resting-place for burning cigars." (*Ruheplätzchen für brennende Cigarren.*)

He wanted to wash his hands. The soap on the washstand said.

"For our charming guest." (*Für unseren lieben Gast.*)

And the sententious towel, like a person who has nothing to say, but thinks he must say something all the same, gave him this reflection, full of good sense but not very apposite, that "to enjoy the morning you must rise early."

"*Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund.*"

At length Christopher dared not even turn in his chair for fear of hearing himself addressed by other voices coming from every part of the room. He wanted to say:

"Be silent, you little monsters! We don't understand each other."

And he burst out laughing crazily, and then tried to explain to his host and hostess that he was thinking of the gathering at the school. He would not have hurt them for the world. And he was not very sensible of the ridiculous. Very soon he grew accustomed to the loquacious cordiality of these people and their belongings. He could have tolerated anything in them!

They were so kind! They were not tiresome either; if they had no taste they were not lacking in intelligence.

They were a little lost in the place to which they had come. The intolerant susceptibilities of the little provincial town did not allow people to enter it as though it were a mill without having properly asked for the honour of becoming part of it. The Reinharts had not sufficiently attended to the provincial code which regulated the duties of new arrivals in the town towards those who had settled in it before them. Reinhart would have submitted to it mechanically. But his wife, to whom such drudgery was oppressive—she disliked being put out—postponed her duties from day to day. She had selected those calls which bored her least, to be paid first, or she had put the others off indefinitely. The distinguished persons who were comprised in the last category choked with indignation at such a want of respect. Angelica Reinhart (her husband called her Lili) was a little free in her manners; she could not take on the official tone. She would address her superiors in the hierarchy familiarly, and make them go red in the face with indignation; and if need be she was not afraid of contradicting them. She had a quick tongue, and always had to say whatever was in her head; sometimes she made extraordinarily foolish remarks at which people laughed behind her back; and also she could be malicious whole-heartedly, and that made her mortal enemies. She would bite her tongue as she was saying rash things, and wish she had not said them, but it was too late. Her husband, the gentlest and most respectful of men, would chide her timidly about it. She would kiss him and say that she was a fool and that he was right. But the next moment she would break out again; and she would always say things at the least suitable moment; she would have burst if she had not said them. She was exactly the sort of woman to get on with Christopher.

Among the many ridiculous things which she ought not to have said, and consequently was always saying, was her trick of perpetually comparing the way things were done in Germany, and the way they were done in France. She was a German (nobody more so) but she had been brought up in Alsace among French Alsatians, and she had felt the attraction of Latin civilisation which so many Germans in the annexed countries, even those who seem the least likely to feel it, cannot

resist. Perhaps, to tell the truth, the attraction had become stronger out of a spirit of contradiction since Angelica had married a North German, and lived with him in purely German society.

She opened up her usual subject of discussion on her first evening with Christopher. She loved the pleasant freedom of conversation in France. Christopher echoed her. France to him was Corinne; bright blue eyes, smiling lips, frank free manners, a musical voice; he longed to know more about it.

Lili Reinhart clapped her hands on finding herself so thoroughly agreeing with Christopher.

"It is a pity," she said, "that my little French friend has gone, but she could not stand it; she has gone."

The image of Corinne was at once blotted out. As a match going out suddenly makes the gentle glimmer of the stars shine out from the dark sky, another image and other eyes appeared.

"Who?" asked Christopher with a start, "the little governess?"

"What?" said Frau Reinhart, "you knew her too?"

He described her; the two portraits were identical.

"You knew her?" repeated Christopher. "Oh! Tell me everything you know about her! . . ."

Frau Reinhart began by declaring that they were bosom friends, and had no secrets from each other. But when she had to go into detail, her knowledge was reduced to very little. They had met out calling. Frau Reinhart had made advances to the girl; and with her usual cordiality had invited her to come and see her. The girl had come two or three times, and they had talked. But the curious Lili had not so easily succeeded in finding out anything about the life of the little Frenchwoman; the girl was very reserved; she had had to worm her story out of her, bit by bit. Frau Reinhart knew that she was called Antoinette Jeannin; she had no fortune, and no friends, except a younger brother who lived in Paris, to whom she was devoted. She used always to talk of him; he was the only subject about which she could talk freely; and Lili Reinhart had gained her confidence by showing sympathy and pity for the boy living alone in Paris without relations, without friends, at a boarding school. It was partly to pay for his

education that Antoinette had accepted a post abroad. But the two children could not live without each other; they wanted to be with each other every day, and the least delay in the delivery of their letters used to make them quite ill with anxiety. Antoinette was always worrying about her brother, the poor child could not always manage to hide his sadness and loneliness from her; every one of his complaints used to sound through Antoinette's heart, and seemed like to break it; the thought that he was suffering used to torture her, and she used often to imagine that he was ill and would not say so. Frau Reinhart in her kindness had often had to rebuke her for her groundless fears, and she used to succeed in restoring her confidence for a moment. She had not been able to find out anything about Antoinette's family or position or her inner self. The girl was terribly shy, and used to draw into herself at the first question. The little she said showed that she was cultured and intelligent; she seemed to have a precocious knowledge of life; she seemed to be at once naïve and undeceived, pious and disillusioned. She had not been happy in the town in a tactless and unkind family. She used not to complain, but it was easy to see that she used to suffer—Frau Reinhart did not exactly know why she had gone. It had been said that she had behaved badly. Angelica did not believe it; she was ready to swear that it was all a disgusting calumny, worthy of the foolish rotten town. But there had been stories; it did not matter what, did it?

"No," said Christopher, bowing his head.

"And so she has gone."

"And what did she say—anything to you when she went?"

"Ah!" said Lilli Reinhart, "I had no chance. I had gone to Cologne for a few days just then! When I came back—*Zu spät*" (too late). She stopped to scold her maid, who had brought her lemon too late for her tea.

And she added sententiously with the solemnity which the true German brings naturally to the performance of the familiar duties of daily life:

"Too late, as one so often is in life!"

(It was not clear whether she meant the lemon or her interrupted story.)

She went on:

"When I returned I found a line from her thanking me for

all I had done, and telling me that she was going; she was returning to Paris; she gave no address."

"And she did not write again?"

"Not again."

Once more Christopher saw her sad face disappear into the night; once more he saw her eyes for a moment just as he had seen them for the last time, looking at him through the carriage window.

The enigma of France was once more set before him more insistently than ever. Christopher never tired of asking Frau Reinhart about the country which she pretended to know so well. And Frau Reinhart who had never been there was not reluctant to tell him about it. Reinhart, a good patriot, full of prejudices against France, which he knew better than his wife, sometimes used to qualify her remarks when her enthusiasm went too far; but she would repeat her assertions only the more vigorously, and Christopher, knowing nothing at all about it, backed her up confidently.

What was more precious even than Lili Reinhart's memories were her books. She had a small library of French books: school-books, a few novels, a few volumes bought at random. Christopher, greedy of knowledge, and ignorant of France, thought them a treasure when Reinhart went and got them for him, and put them at his disposal.

He began with volumes of select passages, old school-books, which had been used by Lili Reinhart or her husband in their school days. Reinhart had assured him that he must begin with them if he wished to find his way about French literature, which was absolutely unknown to him. Christopher was full of respect for those who knew more than himself, and obeyed religiously; and that very evening he began to read. He tried first of all to take stock of the riches in his possession.

He made the acquaintance of certain French writers, namely: Théodore-Henri Barrau, François Pétis de la Croix, Frédéric Baudry, Emile Delérot, Charles-Auguste-Désiré Filon, Samuel Descombaz, and Prosper Baur. He read the poetry of Abbé Joseph Reyre, Pierre Lachambaudie, the Duc de Nivernois, André van Hasselt, Andrieux, Madame Colet, Constance-Marie Princesse de Salm-Dyck, Henriette Hollard, Gabriel-Jean-Baptiste-Ernest-Wilfried Legouvé, Hippolyte

Violeau, Jean Reboul, Jean Racine, Jean de Béranger, Frédéric Béchard, Gustave Nadaud, Édouard Plouvier, Eugène Manuel, Hugo, Millevoye, Chênedollé, James Lacour Delâtre, Félix Chavannes, Francis-Edouard-Joachim, known as François Coppée, and Louis Belmontet. Christopher was lost, drowned, submerged under such a deluge of poetry, and turned to prose. He found Gustave de Molinari, Fléchier, Ferdinand-Édouard Buisson, Mérimée, Malte-Brun, Voltaire, Lamé-Fleury, Dumas père, J.-J. Rousseau, Mézières, Mirabeau, de Mazade, Claretie, Cortambert, Frédéric II, and M. de Voguë. The most often quoted of French historians was Maximilien Samson-Frédéric Schoell. In the French anthology Christopher found *The Proclamation of the New German Empire;* and he read a description of the Germans by Frédéric-Constant de Rougemont, in which he learned that "*the German was born to live in the region of the soul. He has not the light, noisy gaiety of the Frenchman. His is a great soul; his affections are tender, and profound. He is indefatigable in toil and persevering in enterprise. There is no more moral or long-lived people. Germany has an extraordinary number of writers. She has the genius of art. While the inhabitants of other countries pride themselves on being French, English, Spanish, the German on the other hand embraces all humanity in his love. And through its position in the very centre of Europe, the German nation seems to be at once the heart and the higher reason of humanity.*"

Christopher closed the book. He was astonished and tired. He thought:

"The French are good fellows; but they are not clever."

He took another volume. It was on a higher plane: it was meant for high schools. Musset occupied three pages, and Victor Duruy thirty, Lamartine seven pages, and Thiers almost forty. The whole of the *Cid* was included—or almost the whole: the monologues of Don Diègue and Rodrigue had been suppressed because they were too long. Lanfrey exalted Prussia against Napoleon I, and so he had not been cut down; he alone occupied more space than all the great classics of the eighteenth century. Copious narrations of the French defeats of 1870 had been extracted from *La Débâcle* of Zola. Neither Montaigne, nor La Rochefoucauld, nor La Bruyère, nor Diderot, nor Stendhal, nor Balzac, nor Flaubert appeared. On the other

hand, Pascal, who did not appear in the other book, found a place in this as a curiosity; and Christopher learned by the way that the convulsionary "*was one of the fathers of Port-Royal, a girls' school, near Paris....*"[1]

Christopher was on the point of throwing the book away; his head was swimming: he could not see. He said to himself: "I shall never get through with it." He could not formulate any opinion. He turned over the leaves idly for hours without knowing what he was reading. He did not read French easily, and when he had laboured to make out a passage, it was almost always something meaningless and pretentious.

And yet from the chaos there darted flashes of light, like rapier thrusts, words that shocked and stabbed, heroic laughter. Gradually an impression emerged from his first reading, perhaps through the biased scheme of the selections. Voluntarily or involuntarily the German editors had selected those pieces of French which could seem to establish by the testimony of the French themselves the failings of the French and the superiority of the Germans. But they had no notion that what they most exposed to the eyes of an independent mind like Christopher's was the surprising liberty of these Frenchmen who criticised everything in their own country and praised their adversaries. Michelet praised Frederick II, Lanfrey the English of Trafalgar, Charras the Prussia of 1813. No enemy of Napoleon had ever dared to speak of him so harshly. Nothing was too greatly respected to escape their disparagement. Even under the great King the precious poets had had their freedom of speech. Molière spared nothing. La Fontaine laughed at everything. Even Boileau gibed at the nobles. Voltaire derided war, flogged religion, scoffed at his country. Moralists, satirists, pamphleteers, comic writers, they all vied one with another in gay or sombre audacity. Want of respect was universal. The honest German editors were sometimes scared by it, they had to throw a rope to their consciences by trying to excuse Pascal, who lumped together cooks, porters,

[1] The anthologies of French literature which John Christopher borrowed from his friends the Reinharts were:

1. *Selected French Passages for the Use of Secondary Schools*, by Hubert H. Wingerath, Ph. D., director of the real-school of Saint John at Strasbourg. Part II: Middle forms, 7th Edition, 1902, Dumont-Schauberg.

2. L. Herrig and G. F. Burguy: *Literary France*, arranged by F. Tendering, director of the Real-Gymnasium of the Johanneum, Hamburg. 1904, Brunswick.

soldiers, and camp followers; they protested in a note that Pascal would not have written thus if he had been acquainted with the noble armies of modern times. They did not fail to remind the reader how happily Lessing had corrected the Fables of La Fontaine by following, for instance, the advice of the Genevese Rousseau and changing the piece of cheese of Master Crow to a piece of poisoned meat of which the vile fox dies.

"*May you never gain anything but poison. You cursed flatterers!*"

They blinked at naked truth; but Christopher was pleased with it; he loved this light. Here and there he was even a little shocked; he was not used to such unbridled independence, which looks like anarchy to the eyes even of the freest of Germans, who, in spite of everything, are accustomed to order and discipline. And he was led astray by the way of the French; he took certain things too seriously; and other things which were implacable denials seemed to him to be amusing paradoxes. No matter! Surprised or schocked, he was drawn on little by little. He gave up trying to classify his impressions; he passed from one feeling to another; he lived. The gaiety of the French stories—Chamfort, Ségur, Dumas père, Mérimée, all lumped together—delighted him, and every now and then in gusts there would creep forth from the printed page the wild intoxicating scent of the Revolutions.

It was nearly dawn when Louisa, who slept in the next room, woke up and saw the light through the chinks of Christopher's door. She knocked on the wall and asked if he were ill. A chair creaked on the floor: the door opened and Christopher appeared, pale, in his nightgown, with a candle and a book in his hand making strange, solemn, and grotesque gestures. Louisa was in terror and got up in her bed, thinking that he was mad. He began to laugh, and, waving his candle, he declaimed a scene from Molière. In the middle of a sentence he gurgled with laughter; he sat at the foot of his mother's bed to take breath; the candle shook in his hand. Louisa was reassured, and scolded him forcibly:

"What is the matter with you? What is it? Go to bed.... My poor boy, are you going out of your senses?"

But he began again:

"You must listen to this."

And he sat by her bedside and read the play, going back to the beginning again. He seemed to see Corinne; he heard her mocking tones, cutting and sonorous. Louisa protested:

"Go away! Go away! You will catch cold. How tiresome you are. Let me go to sleep!"

He went on relentlessly. He raised his voice, waved his arms, choked with laughter; and he asked his mother if she did not think it wonderful. Louisa turned her back on him, buried herself in the bedclothes, stopped her ears, and said:

"Do leave me alone! . . ."

But she laughed inwardly at hearing his laugh. At last she gave up protesting. And when Christopher had finished the act, and asked her, without eliciting any reply, if she did not think what he had read interesting, he bent over her and saw that she was asleep. Then he smiled, gently kissed her hair, and stole back to his own room.

He borrowed more and more books from the Reinharts' library. There were all sorts of books in it. Christopher devoured them all. He wanted so much to love the country of Corinne and the unknown young woman. He had so much enthusiasm to get rid of that he found a use for it in his reading. Even in second-rate works there were sentences and pages which had the effect on him of a gust of fresh air. He exaggerated the effect, especially when he was talking to Frau Reinhart, who always went a little better than he. Although she was as ignorant as a fish, she delighted to contrast French and German culture, and to decry the German to the advantage of the French, just to annoy her husband, and to avenge herself for the boredom she had to suffer in the little town.

Reinhart was really amused. Notwithstanding his learning, he had stopped short at the ideas he had learned at school. To him the French were a clever people, skilled in practical things, amiable, talkative, but frivolous, susceptible, and boastful, incapable of being serious, or sincere, or of feeling strongly—a people without music, without philosophy, without poetry (except for *l'Art Poétique*, Béranger and François Coppée)—a people of pathos, much gesticulation, exaggerated speech, and pornography. There were not words strong enough for the denunciation of Latin immorality; and for want of a

better he always came back to *frivolity,* which for him, as for the majority of his compatriots, had a particularly unpleasant meaning. And he would end with the usual couplet in praise of the noble German people—the moral people (*"By that,"* Herder has said, *"it is distinguished from all other nations"*)—the faithful people (*treues Volk . . . Treu* meaning everything: sincere, faithful, loyal and upright)—*the People par excellence,* as Fichte says—German Force, the symbol of justice and truth—German thought—the German *Gemüt*—the German language, the only original language, the only language that, like the race itself, has preserved its purity—German women, German wine, German song . . . *"Germany, Germany above everything in the world!"*

Christopher would protest. Frau Reinhart would cry out. They would all shout. They did not get on the less for it. They knew quite well that they were all three good Germans.

Christopher used often to go and talk, dine, and walk with his new friends. Lili Reinhart made much of him, and used to cook dainty suppers for him. She was delighted to have the excuse for satisfying her own greediness. She paid him all sorts of sentimental and culinary attentions. For Christopher's birthday she made a cake, on which were twenty candles, and in the middle a little wax figure in Greek costume, which was supposed to represent Iphigenia holding a bouquet. Christopher, who was profoundly German in spite of himself, was touched by these rather blunt and not very refined marks of true affection.

The excellent Reinharts found other more subtle ways of showing their real friendship. On his wife's instigation Reinhart, who could hardly read a note of music, had bought twenty copies of Christopher's *Lieder*—the first to leave the publisher's shop; he had sent them to different parts of Germany to University acquaintances. He had also sent a certain number to the libraries of Leipzig and Berlin, with which he had dealings through his class-books. For the moment at least their touching enterprise, of which Christopher knew nothing, bore no fruit. The *Lieder* which had been scattered broadcast, seemed to misfire; nobody talked of them; and the Reinharts, who were hurt by this indifference, were glad they had not told Christopher about what they had done, for it would have given him more pain than consolation. But in truth nothing is

lost, as so often appears in life; no effort is in vain. For years nothing happens. Then one day it appears that your idea has made its way. It was impossible to be sure that Christopher's *Lieder* had not reached the hearts of a few good people buried in the country, who were too timid or too tired to tell him so.

One person wrote to him. Two or three months after the Reinharts had sent them, a letter came for Christopher. It was warm, ceremonious, enthusiastic, old-fashioned in form, and came from a little town in Thuringia, and was signed "*Universitäts Musikdirektor Professor Dr. Peter Schulz.*"

It was a great joy for Christopher, and even greater for the Reinharts, when at their house he opened the letter, which he had left lying in his pocket for two days. They read it together. Reinhart made signs to his wife which Christopher did not notice. He looked radiant, until suddenly Reinhart saw his face grow gloomy, and he stopped dead in the middle of his reading.

"Well, why do you stop?" he asked.

(They used the familiar *du*.)

Christopher flung the letter on the table angrily.

"No. It is too much!" he said.

"What is?"

"Read!"

He turned away and went and sulked in a corner.

Reinhart and his wife read the letter, and could find in it only fervent admiration.

"I don't see," he said in astonishment.

"You don't see? You don't see? . . ." cried Christopher, taking the letter and thrusting it in his face. "Can't you read? Don't you see that he is a Brahms-lover?"

And then Reinhart noticed that in one sentence the *Universitäts Musikdirektor* compared Christopher's *Lieder* with those of Brahms. Christopher moaned!

"A friend! I have found a friend at last! . . . And I have hardly found him when I have lost him! . . ."

The comparison revolted him. If they had let him, he would have replied with a stupid letter, or perhaps, upon reflection, he would have thought himself very prudent and generous in not replying at all. Fortunately, the Reinharts were amused by his ill-humour, and kept him from committing any further absurdity. They succeeded in making him write a letter of

thanks. But the letter, written reluctantly, was cold and constrained. The enthusiasm of Peter Schulz was not shaken by it. He sent two or three more letters, brimming over with affection. Christopher was not a good correspondent, and although he was a little reconciled to his unknown friend by the sincerity and real sympathy which he could feel behind his words, he let the correspondence drop. Schulz wrote no more. Christopher never thought about him.

He now saw the Reinharts every day, and frequently several times a day. They spent almost all the evenings together. After spending the day alone in concentration, he had a physical need of talking, of saying everything that was in his mind, even if he were not understood, and of laughing with or without reason, of expanding and stretching himself.

He played for them. Having no other means of showing his gratitude, he would sit at the piano and play for hours together. Frau Reinhart was no musician, and she had difficulty in keeping herself from yawning; but she sympathised with Christopher, and pretended to be interested in everything he played. Reinhart was not much more of a musician than his wife, but was sometimes touched quite materially by certain pieces of music, certain passages, certain bars, and then he would be violently moved sometimes even to tears, and that seemed silly to him. The rest of the time he felt nothing; it was just music to him. That was the general rule. He was never moved except by the least good passages of a composition—absolutely insignificant passages. Both of them persuaded themselves that they understood Christopher, and Christopher tried to pretend that it was so. Every now and then he would be seized by a wicked desire to make fun of them. He would lay traps for them and play things without any meaning, inept *potpourris;* and he would let them think that he had composed them. Then, when they had admired it, he would tell them what it was. Then they would grow wary, and when Christopher played them a piece with an air of mystery, they would imagine that he was trying to catch them again, and they would criticise it. Christopher would let them go on and back them up, and argue that such music was worthless, and then he would break out:

"Rascals! You are right! . . . It is my own!" He would be as

happy as a boy at having taken them in. Frau Reinhart would be cross and come and give him a little slap; but he would laugh so good-humouredly that they would laugh with him. They did not pretend to be infallible. And as they had no leg to stand on, Lili Reinhart would criticise everything and her husband would praise everything, and so they were certain that one or other of them would always be in agreement with Christopher.

For the rest, it was not so much the musician that attracted them in Christopher as the crack-brained boy, with his affectionate ways and true quality of life. The ill that they had heard spoken of him had rather disposed them in his favour. Like him, they were rather oppressed by the atmosphere of the little town; like him, they were frank, they judged for themselves, and they regarded him as a great baby, not very clever in the ways of life, and the victim of his own frankness.

Christopher was not under many illusions concerning his new friends, and it made him sad to think that they did not understand the depths of his character, and that they would never understand it. But he was so much deprived of friendship and he stood in such sore need of it, that he was infinitely grateful to them for wanting to like him a little. He had learned wisdom in his experiences of the last year; he no longer thought he had the right to be too particular. Two years earlier he would not have been so patient. He remembered with amusement and remorse his severe judgement of the honest and tiresome Eulers! Alas! How wisdom had grown in him! He sighed a little. A secret voice whispered: "Yes, but for how long?"

That made him smile and consoled him a little. What would he not have given to have a friend, one friend who would understand him and share his soul! But although he was still young, he had enough experience of the world to know that his desire was one of those which are most difficult to realise in life, and that he could not hope to be happier than the majority of the true artists who had gone before him. He had learned the histories of some of them. Certain books, borrowed from the Reinharts, had told him about the terrible trials through which the German musicians of the seventeenth century had passed, and the calmness and resolution with which

one of these great souls—the greatest of all, the heroic Schütz—had striven, as unshakably he went on his way in the midst of wars and burning towns, and provinces ravaged by the plague, with his country invaded, trampled underfoot by the hordes of all Europe, and—worst of all—broken, worn out, degraded by misfortune, making no fight, indifferent to everything, longing only for rest. He thought: "With such an example, what right has any man to complain? They had no audience, they had no future; they wrote for themselves and God. What they wrote one day would perhaps be destroyed by the next. And yet they went on writing and they were not sad. Nothing made them lose their intrepidity, their joviality. They were satisfied with their song; they asked nothing of life but to live, to earn their daily bread, to express their ideas, and to find a few honest men, simple, true, not artists, who no doubt did not understand them, but had confidence in them and won their confidence in return. How dared he have demanded more than they? There is a minimum of happiness which it is permitted to demand. But no man has the right to more; it rests with a man's self to gain the surplus of happiness, not with others."

Such thoughts brought him new serenity, and he loved his good friends the Reinharts the more for them. He had no idea that even this affection was to be denied him.

He reckoned without the malevolence of small towns. They are tenacious in their spite—all the more tenacious because their spite is aimless. A healthy hatred which knows what it wants is appeased when it has achieved its end. But men who are mischievous from boredom never lay down their arms, for they are always bored. Christopher was a natural prey for their want of occupation. He was beaten without a doubt; but he was bold enough not to seem crushed. He did not bother anybody, but then, he did not bother about anybody. He asked nothing. They were impotent against him. He was happy with his new friends and indifferent to anything that was said or thought of him. That was intolerable. Frau Reinhart roused even more irritation. Her open friendship with Christopher in the face of the whole town seemed, like his attitude, to be a defiance of public opinion. But the good Lili Reinhart defied nothing and nobody. She had no thought of provoking others;

she did what she thought fit without asking anybody else's advice. That was the worst provocation.

All their doings were watched. They had no idea of it. He was extravagant, she scatter-brained, and both even wanting in prudence when they went out together, or even at home in the evening, when they leaned over the balcony talking and laughing. They drifted innocently into a familiarity of speech and manner which could easily supply food for calumny.

One morning Christopher received an anonymous letter. He was accused in basely insulting terms of being Frau Reinhart's lover. His arms fell by his sides. He had never had the least thought of love or even of flirtation with her. He was too honest. He had a Puritanical horror of adultery. The very idea of such a dirty sharing gave him a physical and moral feeling of nausea. To take the wife of a friend would have been a crime in his eyes, and Lili Reinhart would have been the last person in the world with whom he could have been tempted to commit such an offence. The poor woman was not beautiful, and he would not have had even the excuse of passion.

He went to his friends ashamed and embarrassed. They also were embarrassed. Each of them had received a similar letter, but they had not dared to tell each other, and all three of them were on their guard, and watched each other, and dared not move or speak, and they just talked nonsense. If Lili Reinhart's natural carelessness took the ascendant for a moment, or if she began to laugh and talk wildly, suddenly a look from her husband or Christopher would stop her dead; the letter would cross her mind; she would stop in the middle of a familiar gesture and grow uneasy. Christopher and Reinhart were in the same plight. And each of them was thinking: "Do the others know?"

However, they said nothing to each other, and tried to go on as though nothing had happened.

But the anonymous letters went on, growing more and more insulting and dirty. They were plunged into a condition of depression and intolerable shame. They hid themselves when they received the letters, and had not the strength to burn them unopened. They opened them with trembling hands, and as they unfolded the letters their hearts would sink; and when they read what they feared to read, with some new variation

on the same theme—the injurious and ignoble inventions of a mind bent on causing a hurt—they wept in silence. They racked their brains to discover who the wretch might be who so persistently persecuted them.

One day Frau Reinhart, at the end of her letter, confessed the persecution of which she was the victim to her husband, and with tears in his eyes he confessed that he was suffering in the same way. Should they mention it to Christopher! They dared not. But they had to warn him to make him be cautious. At the first words that Frau Reinhart said to him, with a blush, she saw to her horror that Christopher had also received letters. Such utter malignance appalled them. Frau Reinhart had no doubt that the whole town was in the secret. Instead of helping each other, they only undermined each other's fortitude. They did not know what to do. Christopher talked of breaking somebody's head. But whose? And besides, that would be to justify the calumny! . . . Inform the police of the letters? That would make their insinuations public. . . . Pretend to ignore them? It was no longer possible. Their friendly relations were now disturbed. It was useless for Reinhart to have absolute faith in the honesty of his wife and Christopher. He suspected them in spite of himself. He felt that his suspicions were shameful and absurd, and tried hard not to pay any heed to them, and to leave Christopher and his wife alone together. But he suffered, and his wife saw that he was suffering.

It was even worse for her. She had never thought of flirting with Christopher, any more than he had thought of it with her. The calumnious letters brought her imperceptibly to the ridiculous idea that, after all, Christopher was perhaps in love with her; and although he was never anywhere near showing any such feeling for her, she thought she must defend herself, not by referring directly to it, but by clumsy precautions, which Christopher did not understand at first, though, when he did understand, he was beside himself. It was so stupid that it made him laugh and cry at the same time! He in love with the honest little woman, kind enough as she was, but plain and common! . . . And to think that she should believe it! . . . And that he could not deny it, and tell her and her husband:

"Come! There is no danger! Be calm! . . ." But no; he could

not offend these good people. And besides, he was beginning to think that if she held out against being loved by him, it was because she was secretly on the point of loving him. The anonymous letters had had the fine result of having given him so foolish and fantastic an idea.

The situation had become at once so painful and so silly that it was impossible for them to go on. Besides, Lili Reinhart, who, in spite of her brave words, had no strength of character, lost her head in the face of the dumb hostility of the little town. They made shamefaced excuses for not meeting:

"Frau Reinhart was unwell.... Reinhart was busy.... They were going away for a few days...."

Clumsy lies which were always unmasked by chance, which seemed to take a malicious pleasure in doing so.

Christopher was more frank, and said:

"Let us part, my friends. We are not strong enough."

The Reinharts wept. But they were happier when the breach was made.

The town had its triumph. This time Christopher was quite alone. It had robbed him of his last breath of air—the affection, however humble, without which no heart can live.

III

DELIVERANCE

He had no one. All his friends had disappeared. His dear Gottfried, who had come to his aid in times of difficulty, and whom now he so sorely needed, had gone some months before. This time for ever. One evening in the summer of the last year a letter in large handwriting, bearing the address of a distant village, had informed Louisa that her brother had died upon one of his vagabond journeys which the little peddler had insisted on making, in spite of his ill-health. He was buried there in the cemetery of the place. The last manly and serene friendship which could have supported Christopher had been swallowed up. He was left alone with his old mother, who cared nothing for his ideas—could only love him and not understand him. About him was the immense plain of Ger-

many, the green ocean. At every attempt to climb out of it he only slipped back deeper than ever. The hostile town watched him drown. . . .

And as he was struggling, a light flashed upon him in the middle of the night, the image of Hassler, the great musician whom he had loved so much when he was a child. His fame shone over all Germany now. He remembered the promises that Hassler had made him then. And he clung to this piece of wreckage in desperation. Hassler could save him! Hassler must save him! What was he asking? Not help, nor money, nor material assistance of any kind. Nothing but understanding. Hassler had been persecuted like him. Hassler was a free man. He would understand a free man, whom German mediocrity was pursuing with its spite and trying to crush. They were fighting the same battle.

He carried the idea into execution as soon as it occurred to him. He told his mother that he would be away for a week, and that very evening he took the train for the great town in the north of Germany where Hassler was *Kapellmeister.* He could not wait. It was a last effort to breathe.

Hassler was famous. His enemies had not disarmed, but his friends cried that he was the greatest musician, present, past, and future. He was surrounded by partisans and detractors who were equally absurd. As he was not of a very firm character, he had been embittered by the last, and mollified by the first. He devoted his energy to writing things to annoy his critics and make them cry out. He was like an urchin playing pranks. These pranks were often in the most detestable taste. Not only did he devote his prodigious talent to musical eccentricities which made the hair of the pontiffs stand on end, but he showed a perverse predilection for queer themes, bizarre subjects, and often for equivocal and scabrous situations; in a word, for everything which could offend ordinary good sense and decency. He was quite happy when the people howled, and the people did not fail him. Even the Emperor, who dabbled in art, as everyone knows, with the insolent presumption of upstarts and princes, regarded Hassler's fame as a public scandal, and let no opportunity slip of showing his contemptuous indifference to his impudent works. Hassler was enraged and delighted by such august opposition, which had

almost become a consecration for the advanced paths in German art, and went on smashing windows. At every new folly his friends went into ecstasies, and cried that he was a genius.

Hassler's coterie was chiefly composed of writers, painters, and decadent critics, who certainly had the merit of representing the party of revolt against the reaction—always a menace in North Germany—of the pietistic spirit and State morality; but in the struggle independence had been carried to a pitch of absurdity of which they were unconscious. For, if many of them were not lacking in a rude sort of talent, they had little intelligence and less taste. They could not rise above the fastidious atmosphere which they had created, and like all cliques, they had ended by losing all sense of real life. They legislated for themselves and hundreds of fools who read their reviews and gulped down everything they were pleased to promulgate. Their adulation had been fatal to Hassler, for it had made him too pleased with himself. He accepted without examination every musical idea that came into his head, and he had a private conviction that, however he might fall below his own level, he was still superior to that of all other musicians. And though that idea was only too true in the majority of cases, it did not follow that it was a very fit state of mind for the creation of great works. At heart Hassler had a supreme contempt for everybody, friends and enemies alike; and this bitter jeering contempt was extended to himself and life in general. He was all the more driven back into his iron scepticism because he had once believed in a number of generous and simple things. As he had not been strong enough to ward off the slow destruction of the passing of the days, nor hypocritical enough to pretend to believe in the faith he had lost, he was for ever gibing at the memory of it. He was of a Southern German nature, soft and indolent, not made to resist excess of fortune or misfortune, of heat or cold, needing a moderate temperature to preserve its balance. He had drifted insensibly into a lazy enjoyment of life. He loved good food, heavy drinking, idle lounging, and sensuous thoughts. His whole art smacked of these things, although he was too gifted for the flashes of his genius not still to shine forth from his lax music, which drifted with the fashion. No one was more conscious than himself of his decay. In truth, he was the only one to be conscious of it—at rare moments which, naturally, he

avoided. Besides, he was misanthropic, absorbed by his fearful moods, his egotistic preoccupations, his concern about his health—he was indifferent to everything which had formerly excited his enthusiasm or hatred.

Such was the man to whom Christopher came for assistance. With what joy and hope he arrived, one cold, wet morning, in the town wherein there lived the man who symbolised for him the spirit of independence in his art! He expected words of friendship and encouragement from him—words that he needed to help him to go on with the ungrateful, inevitable battle which every true artist has to wage against the world until he breathes his last, without ever for one day laying down his arms; for, as Schiller has said, "*The only relation with the public of which a man never repents—is war.*"

Christopher was so impatient that he just left his bag at the first hotel he came to near the station, and then ran to the theatre to find out Hassler's address. Hassler lived some way from the centre of the town, in one of the suburbs. Christopher took an electric tram, and hungrily ate a roll. His heart thumped as he approached his goal.

The district in which Hassler had chosen his house was almost entirely built in that strange new architecture into which young Germany has thrown an erudite and deliberate barbarism struggling laboriously to have genius. In the middle of the commonplace town, with its straight, characterless streets, there suddenly appeared Egyptian hypogea, Norwegian chalets, cloisters, bastions, exhibition pavilions, pot-bellied houses, fakirs, buried in the ground, with expressionless faces, with only one enormous eye; dungeon gates, ponderous gates, iron hoops, golden cryptograms on the panes of grated windows, belching monsters over the front door, blue porcelain tiles plastered on in most unexpected places; variegated mosaics representing Adam and Eve; roofs covered with tiles of jarring colours; houses like citadels with castellated walls, deformed animals on the roofs, no windows on one side, and then suddenly, close to each other, gaping holes, square, red, angular, triangular, like wounds; great stretches of empty wall from which suddenly there would spring a massive balcony with one window—a balcony supported by Nibelungesque Caryatids, balconies from which there peered through the stone balustrade two pointed heads of old men, bearded and

long-haired, mermen of Bœcklin. On the front of one of these prisons—a Pharaohesque mansion, low and one-storied, with two naked giants at the gate—the architect had written:

"Seine Welt zeige der Künstler,
Die niemals war noch jemals sein wird."

"Let the artist show his universe,
Which never was and yet will ever be."

Christopher was absorbed by the idea of seeing Hassler, and looked with the eyes of amazement and made no attempt to understand. He reached the house he sought, one of the simplest—in a Carolingian style. Inside was rich luxury, commonplace enough. On the staircase was the heavy atmosphere of hot air. There was a small lift which Christopher did not use, as he wanted to gain time to prepare himself for his call by going up the four flights of stairs slowly, with his legs giving and his heart thumping with his excitement. During that short ascent his former interview with Hassler, his childish enthusiasm, the image of his grandfather were as clearly in his mind as though it had all been yesterday.

It was nearly eleven when he rang the bell. He was received by a sharp maid, with a *serva padrona* manner, who looked at him impertinently and began to say that "Herr Hassler could not see him, as Herr Hassler was tired." Then the naïve disappointment expressed in Christopher's face amused her; for after making an unabashed scrutiny of him from head to foot, she softened suddenly and introduced him to Hassler's study, and said she would go and see if Herr Hassler would receive him. Thereupon she gave him a little wink, and closed the door.

On the walls were a few Impressionist paintings and some gallant French engravings of the eighteenth century: for Hassler pretended to some knowledge of all the arts, and Manet and Watteau were joined together in his taste in accordance with the prescription of his coterie. The same mixture of styles appeared in the furniture, and a very fine Louis XV bureau was surrounded by art nouveau armchairs and an Oriental divan with a mountain of multi-coloured cushions. The doors were ornamented with mirrors, and Japanese bric-à-brac covered the shelves and the mantelpiece, on which stood a bust

of Hassler. In a bowl on a round table was a profusion of photographs of singers, female admirers and friends, with witty remarks and enthusiastic interjections. The bureau was incredibly untidy. The piano was open. The shelves were dusty, and half-smoked cigars were lying about everywhere.

In the next room Christopher heard a cross voice grumbling. It was answered by the shrill tones of the little maid. It was clear that Hassler was not very pleased at having to appear. It was clear, also, that the young woman had decided that Hassler should appear; and she answered him with extreme familiarity, and her shrill voice penetrated the walls. Christopher was rather upset at hearing some of the remarks she made to her master. But Hassler did not seem to mind. On the contrary, it rather seemed as though her impertinence amused him; and while he went on growling, he chaffed the girl and took a delight in exciting her. At last Christopher heard a door open, and, still growling and chaffing, Hassler came shuffling.

He entered. Christopher's heart sank. He recognised him! Would to God he had not! It was Hassler, and yet it was not he. He still had his great smooth brow, his face as unwrinkled as that of a babe; but he was bald, stout, yellowish, sleepy-looking; his lower lip drooped a little, his mouth looked bored and sulky. He hunched his shoulders, buried his hands in the pockets of his open waistcoat; old shoes flopped on his feet; his shirt was bagged above his trousers, which he had not finished buttoning. He looked at Christopher with his sleepy eyes, in which there was no light as the young man murmured his name. He bowed automatically, said nothing, nodded towards a chair, and, with a sigh, sank down on the divan, and piled the cushions about himself. Christopher repeated:

"I have already had the honour.... You were kind enough.... My name is Christopher Krafft...."

Hassler lay back on the divan, with his legs crossed, his hands clasped together on his right knee, which he held up to his chin as he replied:

"I don't remember."

Christopher's throat went dry, and he tried to remind him of their former meeting. Under any circumstances it would have been difficult for him to talk of memories so intimate; now it was torture for him. He bungled his sentences, could

not find words, said absurd things which made him blush. Hassler let him flounder on, and never ceased to look at him with his vague, indifferent eyes. When Christopher had reached the end of his story, Hassler went on rocking his knee in silence for a moment, as though he were waiting for Christopher to go on. Then he said:

"Yes.... That does not make us young again..." and stretched his legs.

After a yawn he added:

"... I beg pardon.... Did not sleep.... Supper at the theatre last night..." and yawned again.

Christopher hoped that Hassler would make some reference to what he had just told him, but Hassler, whom the story had not interested at all, said nothing about it, and he did not ask Christopher anything about his life. When he had done yawning he asked:

"Have you been in Berlin long?"

"I arrived this morning," said Christopher.

"Ah!" said Hassler, without any surprise. "What hotel?"

He did not seem to listen to the reply, but got up lazily and pressed an electric bell.

"Allow me," he said.

The little maid appeared with her impertinent manner.

"Kity," said he, "are you trying to make me go without breakfast this morning?"

"You don't think I am going to bring it here while you have someone with you?"

"Why not?" he said, with a wink and a nod in Christopher's direction. "He feeds my mind: I must feed my body."

"Aren't you ashamed to have someone watching you eat—like an animal in a menagerie?"

Instead of being angry, Hassler began to laugh, and corrected her:

"Like a domestic animal," he went on. "But do bring it. I'll eat my shame with it."

Christopher saw that Hassler was making no attempt to find out what he was doing, and tried to lead the conversation back. He spoke of the difficulties of provincial life, of the mediocrity of the people, their narrow-mindedness, and of his own isolation. He tried to interest him in his moral distress. But Hassler was sunk deep in the divan, with his head lying

back on a cushion and his eyes half closed, and let him go on talking without even seeming to listen; or he would raise his eyelids for a moment and pronounce a few coldly ironical words, some ponderous jest at the expense of provincial people, which cut short Christopher's attempts to talk more intimately. Kitty returned with the breakfast tray: coffee, butter, ham, etc. She put it down crossly on the desk in the middle of the untidy papers. Christopher waited until she had gone before he went on with his sad story which he had such difficulty in continuing. Hassler drew the tray towards himself. He poured himself out some coffee, and sipped at it. Then, in a familiar and cordial though rather contemptuous way, he stopped Christopher in the middle of a sentence to ask if he would take a cup.

Christopher refused. He tried to pick up the thread of his sentence, but he was more and more nonplussed, and did not know what he was saying. He was distracted by the sight of Hassler with his plate under his chin, like a child, gorging pieces of bread and butter and slices of ham which he held in his fingers. However, he did succeed in saying that he composed, that he had had an overture to the *Judith* of Hebbel performed. Hassler listened absently.

"*Was?*" (What?) he asked.

Christopher repeated the title.

"*Ach! So, so!*" (Ah! Good, good!) said Hassler, dipping his bread and his fingers into his cup. That was all.

Christopher was discouraged, and was on the point of getting up and going, but he thought of his long journey in vain, and, summoning up all his courage, he murmured a proposal that he should play some of his works to Hassler. At the first mention of it Hassler stopped him.

"No, no. I don't know anything about it," he said, with his chaffing and rather insulting irony. "Besides, I haven't the time."

Tears came to Christopher's eyes. But he had vowed not to leave until he had Hassler's opinion about his work. He said, with a mixture of confusion and anger:

"I beg your pardon, but you promised once to hear me. I came to see you for that from the other end of Germany. You shall hear me."

Hasler, who was not used to such ways, looked at the

awkward young man, who was furious, blushing, and near tears. That amused him, and, wearily shrugging his shoulders, he pointed to the piano, and said, with an air of comic resignation:

"Well, then! . . . There you are!"

On that he lay back on his divan, like a man who is going to sleep, smoothed out his cushions, put them under his outstretched arms, half closed his eyes, opened them for a moment to take stock of the size of the roll of music which Christopher had brought from one of his pockets, gave a little sigh, and lay back to listen listlessly.

Christopher was intimidated and mortified, but he began to play. It was not long before Hassler opened his eyes and ears with the professional interest of the artist who is struck in spite of himself by a beautiful thing. At first he said nothing, and lay still, but his eyes became less dim, and his sulky lips moved. Then he suddenly woke up, growling his surprise and approbation. He only gave inarticulate interjections, but the tone of them left no doubt as to his feelings, and they gave Christopher an inexpressible pleasure. Hassler forgot to count the number of pages that had been played, and were left to be played. When Christopher had finished a piece, he said:

"Go on! . . . Go on! . . ."

He was beginning to use human language.

"That's good! Good!" he exclaimed to himself. "Famous! . . . Awfully famous! (*Schrecklich famos!*) But, damme!" He growled in astonishment. "What is it?"

He had risen on his seat, was stretching for wind, making a trumpet with his hand, talking to himself, laughing with pleasure, or at certain odd harmonies, just putting out his tongue as though to moisten his lips. An unexpected modulation had such an effect on him that he got up suddenly with an exclamation, and came and sat at the piano by Christopher's side. He did not seem to notice that Christopher was there. He was only concerned with the music, and when the piece was finished he took the book and began to read the page again, then the following pages, and went on ejaculating his admiration and surprise as though he had been alone in the room.

"The devil!" he said. "Where did the little beast find that? . . ."

He pushed Christopher away with his shoulders, and himself played certain passages. He had a charming touch on the piano, very soft, caressing, and light. Christopher noticed his fine long, well-tended hands, which were a little morbidly aristocratic and out of keeping with the rest. Hassler stopped at certain chords and repeated them, winking and clicking with his tongue. He hummed with his lips imitating the sounds of the instruments, and went on interspersing the music with his apostrophes, in which pleasure and annoyance were mingled. He could not help having a secret irritation, an unavowed jealousy, and at the same time he greedily enjoyed it all.

Although he went on talking to himself as though Christopher did not exist, Christopher, blushing with pleasure, could not help taking Hassler's exclamations to himself, and he explained what he had tried to do. At first Hassler seemed not to pay any attention to what the young man was saying, and went on thinking out loud; then something that Christopher said struck him, and he was silent, with his eyes still fixed on the music, which he turned over as he listened without seeming to hear. Christopher grew more and more excited, and at last he plunged into confidence, and talked with naïve enthusiasm about his projects and his life.

Hassler was silent, and, as he listened he slipped back into his irony. He had let Christopher take the book from his hands; with his elbow on the rack of the piano and his hand on his forehead, he looked at Christopher, who was explaining his work with youthful ardour and eagerness. And he smiled bitterly as he thought of his own beginning, his own hopes, and of Christopher's hopes, and all the disappointments that lay in wait for him.

Christopher spoke with his eyes cast down, fearful of losing the thread of what he had to say. Hassler's silence encouraged him. He felt that Hassler was watching him and not missing a word that he said, and he thought he had broken the ice between them, and he was glad at heart. When he had finished he shyly raised his head—confidently, too—and looked at Hassler. All the joy welling in him was frozen on the instant, like too early birds, when he saw the gloomy, mocking eyes that looked into his without kindness. He was silent.

After an icy moment, Hassler spoke dully. He had changed

once more; he affected a sort of harshness towards the young man. He teasted him cruelly about his plans, his hopes of success, as though he were trying to chaff himself, now that he had recovered himself. He set himself coldly to destroy his faith in life, his faith in art, his faith in himself. Bitterly he gave himself as an example, speaking of his actual works in an insulting fashion.

"Hog-wash!" he said. "That is what these swine want. Do you think there are ten people in the world who love music? Is there a single one?"

"There is myself!" said Christopher emphatically. Hassler looked at him, shrugged his shoulders, and said wearily:

"You will be like the rest . You will do as the rest have done. You will think of success, of amusing yourself, like the rest.... And you will be right...."

Christopher tried to protest, but Hassler cut him short; he took the music and began bitterly to criticise the works which he had first been praising. Not only did he harshly pick out the real carelessness, the mistakes in writing, the faults of taste or of expression which had escaped the young man, but he made absurd criticisms, criticisms which might have been made by the most narrow and antiquated of musicians, from which he himself, Hassler, had had to suffer all his life. He asked what was the sense of it all. He did not even criticise: he denied; it was as though he were trying desperately to efface the impression that the music had made on him in spite of himself.

Christopher was horrified, and made no attempt to reply. How could he reply to absurdities which he blushed to hear on the lips of a man whom he esteemed and loved? Besides, Hassler did not listen to him. He stopped at that—stopped dead, with the book in his hands, shut; no expression in his eyes, and his lips drawn down in bitterness. At last he said, as though he had once more forgotten Christopher's presence:

"Ah! the worst misery of all is that there is not a single man who can understand you!"

Christopher was racked with emotion. He turned suddenly, laid his hand on Hassler's, and with love in his heart he repeated:

"There is myself!"

But Hassler did not move his hand, and if something stirred

in his heart for a moment at that boyish cry, no light shone in his dull eyes, as they looked at Christopher. Irony and evasion were in the ascendant. He made a ceremonious and comic little bow in acknowledgement.

"Honoured!" he said.

He was thinking:

"Do you, though? Do you think I have lost my life for you?"

He got up, threw the book on the piano, and went with his long spindle legs and sat on the divan again. Christopher had divined his thoughts, and had felt the savage insult in them, and he tried proudly to reply that a man does not need to be understood by everybody; certain souls are worth a whole people; they think for it, and what they have thought the people have to think. But Hassler did not listen to him. He had fallen back into his apathy, wearied by the wakening of the life slumbering in him. Christopher, too sane to understand the sudden change, felt that he had lost. But he could not resign himself to losing after seeming to be so near victory. He made desperate efforts to excite Hassler's attention once more. He took up his music book, and tried to explain the reason for the irregularities which Hassler had remarked. Hassler lay back on the sofa, and preserved a gloomy silence. He neither agreed nor contradicted; he was only waiting for him to finish.

Christopher saw that there was nothing more to be done. He stopped short in the middle of a sentence. He rolled up his music and got up. Hassler got up, too. Christopher was shy and ashamed, and murmured excuses. Hassler bowed slightly, with a certain haughty and bored distinction, coldly held out his hand and politely accompanied him to the door without a word of suggestion that he should stay or come again.

Christopher found himself in the street once more, absolutely crushed. He walked at random; he did not know where he was going. He walked down several streets mechanically, and then found himself at a station of the tramway by which he had come. He went back by it without thinking of what he was doing. He sank down on the seat with his arms and legs limp. It was impossible to think or to collect his ideas; he thought of nothing; he did not try to think. He was afraid to

envisage himself. He was utterly empty. It seemed to him that there was emptiness everywhere about him in that town. He could not breathe in it. The mists, the massive houses stifled him. He had only one idea—to fly, to fly as quickly as possible—as if by escaping from the town he would leave in it the bitter disillusion which he had found in it.

He returned to his hotel. It was half-past twelve. It was two hours since he had entered it—with what a light shining in his heart! Now it was dead.

He took no lunch. He did not go up to his room. To the astonishment of the people of the hotel, he asked for his bill, paid as though he had spent the night there, and said that he was going. In vain did they explain to him that there was no hurry, that the train he wanted to go by did not leave for hours, and that he had much better wait in the hotel. He insisted on going to the station at once. He was like a child. He wanted to go by the first train, no matter which, and not to stay another hour in the place. After the long journey and all the expense he had incurred—although he had taken his holiday not only to see Hassler, but the museums, and to hear concerts and to make certain acquaintances—he had only one idea in his head: To go . . .

He went back to the station. As he had been told, his train did not leave for three hours. And also the train was not express (for Christopher had to go by the cheapest class) and stopped on the way. Christopher would have done better to go by the next train, which went two hours later and caught up the first. But that meant spending two more hours in the place, and Christopher could not bear it. He would not even leave the station while he was waiting. A gloomy period of waiting in those vast and empty halls, dark and noisy, where strange shadows were going in and out, always busy, always hurrying; strange shadows who meant nothing to him, all unknown to him, not one friendly face. The misty day died down. The electric lamps, enveloped in fog, flushed the darkness and made it darker than ever. Christopher grew more and more depressed as time went on, waiting in agony for the time to go. Ten times an hour he went to look at the train indicators to make sure that he had not made a mistake. As he was reading them once more from end to end to pass the time, the name of a place caught his eye. He thought he knew it. It was only

after a moment that he remembered that it was where old Schulz lived, who had written him such kind and enthusiastic letters. In his wretchedness the idea came to him of going to see his unknown friend. The town was not on the direct line on his way home, but a few hours away, by a little local line. It meant a whole night's journey, with two or three changes and interminable waits. Christopher never thought about it. He decided suddenly to go. He had an instinctive need of clinging to sympathy of some sort. He gave himself no time to think, and telegraphed to Schulz to say that he would arrive next morning. Hardly had he sent the telegram than he regretted it. He laughed bitterly at his eternal illusions. Why go to meet a new sorrow?—But it was done now. It was too late to change his mind.

These thoughts filled his last hour of waiting—his train at last was ready. He was the first to get into it, and he was so childish that he only began to breathe again when the train moved, and through the carriage window he could see the outlines of the town fading into the grey sky under the heavy downpour of the night. He thought he must have died if he had spent the night in it.

At that very hour—about six in the evening—a letter from Hassler came for Christopher at his hotel. Christopher's visit stirred many things in him. The whole afternoon he had been thinking of it bitterly, and not without sympathy for the poor boy who had come to him with such eager affection, to be received so coldly. He was sorry for that reception, and a little angry with himself. In truth, it had been only one of those fits of sulky whimsies to which he was subject. He thought to make it good by sending Christopher a ticket for the opera and a few words appointing a meeting after the performance. Christopher never knew anything about it. When he did not see him, Hassler thought:

"He is angry. So much the worse for him!"

He shrugged his shoulders, and did not wait long for him.

Next day Christopher was far away—so far that all eternity would not have been enough to bring them together. And they were separated for ever.

Peter Schulz was seventy-five. He had always had delicate health, and age had not spared him. He was fairly tall, but

stooping, and his head hung down to his chest. He had a weak throat and difficulty in breathing. Asthma, catarrh, bronchitis were always upon him, and the marks of the struggles he had to make—many a night sitting up in his bed, bending forward, dripping with sweat in the effort to force a breath of air into his stifling lungs—were in the sorrowful lines on his long, thin, clean-shaven face. His nose was long and a little swollen at the top. Deep lines came from under his eyes and crossed his cheeks, that were hollow from his toothlessness. Age and infirmity had not been the only sculptors of that poor wreck of a man: the sorrows of life also had had their share in its making. And in spite of all he was not sad. There were kindness and serenity in his large mouth. But in his eyes especially there was that which gave a touching softness to the old face. They were light grey, limpid, and transparent. They looked straight, calmly and frankly. They hid nothing of the soul. Its depths could be read in them.

His life had been uneventful. He had been alone for years. His wife was dead. She was not very good, nor very intelligent, and she was not at all beautiful. But he preserved a tender memory of her. It was twenty-five years since he had lost her, and he had never once failed at night to have a little imaginary conversation, sad and tender, with her before he went to sleep. He shared all his doings with her. He had had no children. That was the great sorrow of his life. He had transferred his need of affection to his pupils, to whom he was attached as a father to his sons. He had found very little return. An old heart can feel very near to a young heart, and almost of the same age; knowing how brief are the years that lie between them. But the young man never has any idea of that. To him an old man is a man of another age, and, besides, he is absorbed by his immediate anxieties, and instinctively turns away from the melancholy end of all his efforts. Old Schulz had sometimes found gratitude in his pupils, who were touched by the keen and lively interest he took in everything good or ill that happened to them. They used to come and see him from time to time. They used to write and thank him when they left the University. Some of them used to go on writing, occasionally during the years following. And then old Schulz would hear nothing more of them except in the papers which kept him informed of their advancement, and he would be as

glad of their success as though it was his own. He was never hurt by their silence. He found a thousand excuses for it. He never doubted their affection, and used to ascribe even to the most selfish the feelings that he had for them.

But his books were his greatest refuge. They neither forgot nor deceived him. The souls which he cherished in them had risen above the flood of time. They were immutable, fixed for eternity in the love they inspired and seemed to feel, and gave forth once more to those who loved them. He was Professor of Æsthetics and the History of Music, and he was like an old wood quivering with the songs of birds. Some of these songs sounded very far away. They came from the depths of the ages. But they were not the least sweet and mysterious of all. Others were familiar and intimate to him, dear companions; their every phrase reminded him of the joys and sorrow of his past life, conscious or unconscious—for under every day lit by the light of the sun there are unfolded other days lit by a light unknown. And there were some songs that he had never yet heard, songs which said the things that he had been long awaiting and needing; and his heart opened to receive them like the earth to receive rain. And so old Schulz listened, in the silence of his solitary life, to the forest filled with birds, and, like the monk of the legend, who slept in the ecstasy of the song of the magic bird, the years passed over him and the evening of life was come, but still he had the heart of a boy of twenty.

He was not only rich in music. He loved the poets—old and new. He had a predilection for those of his own country, especially for Goethe; but he also loved those of other countries. He was a learned man, and could read several languages. In mind he was a contemporary of Herder and the great *Weltbürger*—the "citizens of the world," of the end of the eighteenth century. He had lived through the years of bitter struggle which preceded and followed '70, and was immersed in their vast idea. And although he adored Germany, he was not "vainglorious" about it. He thought, with Herder, that "*among all vainglorious men, he who is vainglorious of his nationality is the completest fool,*" and, with Schiller, that "*it is a poor ideal only to write for one nation.*" And he was timid of mind, but his heart was large, and ready to welcome lovingly everything beautiful in the world. Perhaps he was too

indulgent with mediocrity; but his instinct never doubted as to what was the best; and if he was not strong enough to condemn the sham artists admired by public opinion, he was always strong enough to defend the artists of originality and power whom public opinion disregarded. His kindness often led him astray. He was fearful of committing any injustice, and when he did not like what others liked, he never doubted but that it must be he who was mistaken, and he would manage to love it. It was so sweet to him to love! Love and admiration were even more necessary to his moral being than air to his miserable lungs. And so how grateful he was to those who gave him a new opportunity of showing them! Christopher could have no idea of what his *Lieder* had been to him. He himself had not felt them nearly so keenly when he had written them. His songs were to him only a few sparks thrown out from his inner fire. He had cast them forth, and would cast forth others. But to old Schulz they were a whole world suddenly revealed to him—a whole world to be loved. His life had been lit up by them.

A year before he had had to resign his position at the University. His health, growing more and more precarious, prevented his lecturing. He was ill and in bed when Wolf's Library had sent him, as usual, a parcel of the latest music they had received, and in it were Christopher's *Lieder*. He was alone. He was without relatives. The few that he had had were long since dead. He was delivered into the hands of an old servant, who profited by his weakness to make him do whatever she liked. A few friends hardly younger than himself used to come and see him from time to time, but they were not in very good health either, and when the weather was bad they, too, stayed indoors and missed their visits. It was winter then, and the streets were covered with melting snow. Schulz had not seen anybody all day. It was dark in the room. A yellow fog was drawn over the windows like a screen, making it impossible to see out. The heat of the stove was thick and oppressive. From the church hard by an old peal of bells of the seventeenth century chimed every quarter of an hour, haltingly and horribly out of tune, scraps of monotonous chants, which seemed grim in their heartiness to Schulz when he was far from gay himself. He was coughing, propped up

by a heap of pillows. He was trying to read Montaigne, whom he loved; but now he did not find as much pleasure in reading him as usual. He let the book fall, and was breathing with difficulty and dreaming. The parcel of music was on the bed. He had not the courage to open it. He was sad at heart. At last he sighed, and when he had very carefully untied the string, he put on his spectacles and began to read the pieces of music. His thoughts were elsewhere, always returning to memories which he was trying to thrust aside.

The book he was holding was Christopher's. His eyes fell on an old canticle, the words of which Christopher had taken from a simple, pious poet of the seventeenth century, and he had modernised them. The *Christliches Wanderlied* (The Christian Wanderer's Song) of Paul Gerhardt:

"Hoff! O du arme Seele,
Hoff! und sei unverzagt.

"Erwarte nur der Zeit,
So wirst du schon erblicken,
Die Sonne der schönsten Freud."

"Hope, oh! thou wretched soul,
Hope, hope and be valiant!

Only wait then, wait,
And surely thou shalt see
The sun of lovely Joy."

Old Schulz knew the ingenuous words, but never had they so spoken to him, never so nearly.... It was not the tranquil piety, soothing and lulling the soul by its monotony. It was a soul like his own. It was his own soul, but younger and stronger, suffering, striving to hope, striving to see, and seeing, Joy. His hands trembled, great tears trickled down his cheeks. He read on:

"Auf! Auf! gieb deinem Schmerze
Und Sorgen gute Nacht!
Lass fahren was das Herze
Betrübt und traurig macht!"

"Up! up! and give thy sorrow
And all thy cares good night;
And all that grieves and saddens
Thy heart be put to flight."

Christopher brought to these thoughts a boyish and valiant ardour, and the heroic laughter in it showed forth in the last naïve and confident verses:

"Bist du doch nicht Regente
Der alles führen soll,
Gott sitzt im Regimente
Und führet alles wohl."

Not thou thyself art ruler
Whom all things must obey,
But God is Lord decreeing–
All follows in His way."

And when there came the superbly defiant stanzas which in his youthful barbarian insolence he had calmly plucked from their original position in the poem to form the conclusion of his *Lied:*

"Und ob gleich alle Teufel
Hier wollten wiederstehn
So wird doch ohne Zweifel,
Gott nicht zurücke gehn.

"Was er ihm vorgenommen,
Und was er haben will
Das muss doch endlich kommen
Zu seinem Zweck und Ziel."

"And even though all Devils
Came and opposed his will,
There was no cause for doubting,
God will be steadfast still;

What He has undertaken,
All His divine decree–
Exactly as He ordered
At last shall all things be."

. . . then there were transports of delight, the intoxication of war, the triumph of a Roman *Imperator.*

The old man trembled all over. Breathlessly he followed the impetuous music like a child dragged along by a companion. His heart beat. Tears trickled down. He stammered:

"Oh! My God! . . . Oh! My God! . . ."

He began to sob, and he laughed; he was happy. He choked. He was attacked by a terrible fit of coughing. Salome, the old servant, ran to him, and she thought the old man was going

to die. He went on crying, and coughing, and saying over and over again:

"Oh! My God! . . . My God! . . ."

And in the short moments of respite between the fits of coughing he laughed a little hysterically.

Salome thought he was going mad. When at last she understood the cause of his agitation, she scolded him sharply:

"How can anybody get into such a state over a piece of foolery! . . . Give it me! I shall take it away. You shan't see it again."

But the old man held firm, in the midst of his coughing, and he cried to Salome to leave him alone. As she insisted, he grew angry, swore, and choked himself with his oaths. Never had she known him to be angry and to stand out against her. She was aghast, and surrendered her prize. But she did not mince her words with him. She told him he was an old fool, and said that hitherto she had thought she had to do with a gentleman, but that now she saw her mistake; that he said things which would make a ploughman blush, that his eyes were starting from his head, and if they had been pistols would have killed her. . . . She would have gone on for a long time in that strain if he had not got up furiously on his pillow and shouted at her: "Go!" in so peremptory a voice that she went, slamming the door, and declaring that he might call her as much as he liked, only she would not put herself out, and would leave him alone to kick the bucket.

Then silence descended upon the darkening room. Once more the bells pealed placidly and grotesquely through the calm evening. A little ashamed of his anger, old Schulz was lying on his back, motionless, waiting, breathless, for the tumult in his heart to die down. He was clasping the precious *Lieder* to his breast and laughing like a child.

He spent the following days of solitude in a sort of ecstasy. He thought no more of his illness, of the winter, of the grey light, or of his loneliness. Everything was bright and filled with love about him. So near to death, he felt himself living again in the young soul of an unknown friend.

He tried to imagine Christopher. He did not see him as anything like what he was. He saw him rather as an idealised version of himself, as he would have liked to be: fair, slim,

with blue eyes, and a gentle, quiet voice, soft, timid, and tender. He idealised everything about him: his pupils, his neighbours, his friends, his old servant. His gentle, affectionate disposition and his want of the critical faculty—in part voluntary, so as to avoid any disturbing thought—surrounded him with serene, pure images like himself. It was the kindly lying which he needed if he were to live. He was not altogether deceived by it, and often in his bed at night he would sigh as he thought of a thousand little things which had happened during the day to contradict his idealism. He knew quite well that old Salome used to laugh at him behind his back with her gossips, and that she used to rob him regularly every week. He knew that his pupils were obsequious with him while they had need of him, and that after they had received all the services they could expect from him they deserted him. He knew that his former colleagues at the University had forgotten him altogether since he had retired, and that his successor attacked him in his articles, not by name, but by some treacherous allusion, and by quoting some worthless thing that he had said, or by pointing out his mistakes—a procedure very common in the world of criticism. He knew that his old friend Kunz had lied to him that very afternoon, and that he would never see again the books which his other friend, Pottpetschmidt, had borrowed for a few days—which was hard for a man who, like himself, was as attached to his books as to living people. Many other sad things, old or new, would come to him. He tried not to think of them, but they were there all the same. He was conscious of them. Sometimes the memory of them would pierce him like some rending sorrow.

"Oh! My God! My God! . . ."

He would groan in the silence of the night. And then he would discard such hurtful thoughts; he would deny them; he would try to be confident, and optimistic, and to believe in human truth; and he would believe. How often had his illusions been brutally destroyed! But always others springing into life—always, always. . . . He could not do without them.

The unknown Christopher became a fire of warmth to his life. The first cold, ungracious letter which he received from him would have hurt him (perhaps it did so) but he would not admit it, and it gave him a childish joy. He was so modest,

and asked so little of men, that the little he received from them was enough to feed his need of loving and being grateful to them. To see Christopher was a happiness which he had never dared to hope for, for he was too old now to journey to the banks of the Rhine, and as for asking Christopher to come to him, the idea had never even occurred to him.

Christopher's telegram reached him in the evening, just as he was sitting down to dinner. He did not understand at first. He thought he did not know the signature. He thought there was some mistake, that the telegram was not for him. He read it three times. In his excitement his spectacles would not stay on his nose. The lamp gave a very bad light, and the letters danced before his eyes. When he did understand he was so overwhelmed that he forgot to eat. In vain did Salome shout at him. He could not swallow a morsel. He threw his napkin on the table, unfolded—a thing he never did. He got up, hobbled to get his hat and stick, and went out. Old Schulz's first thought on receiving such good news was to go and share it with others, and to tell his friends of Christopher's coming.

He had two friends who were music-mad like himself, and he had succeeded in making them share his enthusiasm for Christopher—Judge Samuel Kunz and the dentist, Oscar Pottpetschmidt, who was an excellent singer. The three old friends had often talked about Christopher, and they had played all his music that they could find. Pottpetschmidt sang, Schulz accompanied, and Kunz listened. They would go into ecstasies for hours together. How often had they said while they were playing:

"Ah! If only Krafft were here!"

Schulz laughed to himself in the street for the joy he had and was going to give. Night was falling, and Kunz lived in a little village half an hour away from the town. But the sky was clear; it was a soft April evening. The nightingales were singing. Old Schulz's heart was overflowing with happiness. He breathed without difficulty, he walked like a boy. He strode along gleefully, without heeding the stones against which he kicked in the darkness. He turned blithely into the side of the road when carts came along, and exchanged a merry greeting with the drivers, who looked at him in astonishment when the lamps showed the old man climbing up the bank of the road.

Night was fully come when he reached Kunz's house, a little way out of the village in a little garden. He drummed on the door and shouted at the top of his voice. A window was opened, and Kunz appeared in alarm. He peered through the door, and asked:

"Who is there? What is it?"

Schulz was out of breath, but he called gladly:

"Krafft—Krafft is coming tomorrow...." Kunz did not understand, but he recognised the voice.

"Schulz!... What! At this hour? What is it?"

Schulz repeated: "Tomorrow; he is coming tomorrow morning!..."

"What?" asked Kunz, still mystified.

"Krafft!" cried Schulz.

Kunz pondered the word for a moment; then a loud exclamation showed that he had understood.

"I am coming down!" he shouted.

The window was closed. He appeared on the steps with a lamp in his hand, and came down into the garden. He was a little stout old man, with a large grey head, a red beard, red hair on his face and hands. He took little steps, and he was smoking a porcelain pipe. This good-natured, rather sleepy little man had never worried much about anything. For all that, the news brought by Schulz excited him; he waved his short arms and his lamp, and asked:

"What? Is it true? Is he really coming?"

"Tomorrow morning!" said Schulz, triumphantly waving the telegram.

The two old friends went and sat on a seat in the arbour. Schulz took the lamp. Kunz carefully unfolded the telegram, and read it slowly in a whisper. Schulz read it again aloud over his shoulder. Kunz went on looking at the paper, the marks on the telegram, the time when it had been sent, the time when it had arrived, the number of words. Then he gave the precious paper back to Schulz, who was laughing happily, looked at him, and wagged his head, and said:

"Ah! well.... Ah! well!..."

After a moment's thought, and after drawing in and expelling a cloud of tobacco-smoke, he put his hand on Schulz's knee, and said:

"We must tell Pottpetschmidt."

"I was going to him," said Schulz.

"I will go with you," said Kunz.

He went in and put down his lamp, and came back immediately. The two old men went on arm-in-arm. Pottpetschmidt lived at the other end of the village. Schulz and Kunz exchanged a few absent words, but they were both pondering the news. Suddenly Kunz stopped, and whacked on the ground with his stick:

"Oh! Lord!" he said.... "He is away!"

He had remembered that Pottpetschmidt had had to go away that afternoon for an operation at a neighbouring town, where he had to spend the night and stay a day or two. Schulz was distressed. Kunz was equally put out. They were proud of Pottpetschmidt; they would have liked to show him off. They stood in the middle of the road, and could not make up their minds what to do.

"What shall we do? What shall we do?" asked Kunz.

"Krafft absolutely must hear Pottpetschmidt," said Schulz.

He thought for a moment, and said:

"We must send him a telegram."

They went to the post office, and together they composed a long and excited telegram, of which it was very difficult to understand a word. Then they went back. Schulz reckoned:

"He could be here tomorrow morning if he took the first train."

But Kunz pointed out that it was too late, and that the telegram would not be sent until the morning. Schulz nodded, and they said:

"How unfortunate!"

They parted at Kunz's door; for, in spite of his friendship for Schulz, it did not go so far as to make him commit the imprudence of accompanying Schulz outside the village, and even to the end of the road by which he would have had to come back alone in the dark. It was arranged that Kunz should dine on the morrow with Schulz. Schulz looked anxiously at the sky:

"If only it is fine tomorrow!"

And his heart was a little lighter when Kunz, who was supposed to have a wonderful knowledge of meteorology, looked gravely at the sky—for he was no less anxious than

Schulz that Christopher should see their little countryside in all its beauty—and said:

"It will be fine tomorrow."

Schulz went along the road to the town, and came to it, not without having stumbled more than once in the ruts and the heaps of stones by the wayside. Before he went home he called in at the confectioner's to order a certain tart which was the pride of the town. Then he went home, but just as he was going in he turned back to go to the station to find out the exact time at which the train arrived. At last he did go home, and called Salome, and discussed at length the dinner for the morrow. Then only he went to bed worn out; but he was as excited as a child on Christmas Eve, and all night he turned about and about, and never slept a wink. About one o'clock in the morning he thought of getting up to go and tell Salome to cook a stewed carp for dinner, for she was marvellously successful with that dish. He did not tell her; and it was as well, no doubt. But he did get up to arrange all sorts of things in the room he meant to give Christopher; he took a thousand precautions so that Salome should not hear him, for he was afraid of being scolded. All night long he was afraid of missing the train, although Christopher could not arrive before eight o'clock. He was up very early. He first looked at the sky; Kunz had not made a mistake; it was glorious weather. On tiptoe Schulz went down to the cellar; he had not been there for a long time, fearing the cold and the steep stairs. He selected his best wines, knocked his head hard against the ceiling as he came up again, and thought he was going to choke when he reached the top of the stairs with his full basket. Then he went to the garden with his shears; ruthlessly he cut his finest roses and the first branches of lilac in flower. Then he went up to his room again, shaved feverishly, and cut himself more than once. He dressed carefully, and set out for the station. It was seven o'clock. Salome had not succeeded in making him take so much as a drop of milk, for he declared that Christopher would not have had breakfast when he arrived, and that they would have breakfast together when they came from the station.

He was at the station three-quarters of an hour too soon. He waited and waited for Christopher, and finally missed

him. Instead of waiting patiently at the gate, he went on to the platform, and lost his head in the crowd of people coming and going. In spite of the exact information of the telegram, he had imagined, God knows why, that Christopher would arrive by a different train from that which brought him; and, besides, it had never occurred to him that Christopher would get out of a fourth-class carriage. He stayed on for more than half an hour waiting at the station, when Christopher, who had long since arrived, had gone straight to his house. As a crowning misfortune, Salome had just gone out to do her shopping; Christopher found the door shut. The woman next door, whom Salome had told to say, in case anyone should ring, that she would soon be back, gave the message without any addition to it. Christopher, who had not come to see Salome, and did not even know who she was, thought it a very bad joke; he asked if *Herr Universitäts Musikdirektor* Schulz was not at home. He was told "Yes," but the woman could not tell him where he was. Christopher was furious, and went away.

When old Schulz came back with a face a yard long, and learned from Salome, who had just come in too, what had happened, he was in despair; he almost wept. He stormed at his servant for her stupidity in going out while he was away. and not having even given instructions that Christopher was to be kept waiting. Salome replied in the same way that she could not imagine that he would be so foolish as to miss a man whom he had gone to meet. But the old man did not stay to argue with her; without losing a moment, he hobbled out of doors again, and went off to look for Christopher armed with the very vague clues given him by his neighbours.

Christopher had been offended at finding nobody, and not even a word of excuse. Not knowing what to do until the next train, he went and walked about the town and the fields, which he thought very pretty. It was a quiet, reposeful little town sheltered by gently sloping hills; there were gardens round the houses, cherry trees and flowers, green lawns, beautiful shady trees, pseudo-antique ruins, white busts of princesses with gentle and pleasing faces poised on marble columns in the midst of the trees. All about the town were meadows and hills. In the flowering trees blackbirds whistled joyously, forming little orchestras of flutes gay and solemn. It was not long

before Christopher's ill humour vanished; he forgot Peter Schulz.

The old man rushed vainly through the streets questioning people; he went up to the old castle on the hill above the town, and was coming back in despair, when, with his keen, far-sighted eyes, he saw some distance away a man lying in a meadow in the shade of a thorn. He did not know Christopher; he had no means of being sure that it was he. Besides, the man's back was turned towards him, and his face was half hidden in the grass. Schulz prowled along the road and about the meadow with his heart beating:

"It is he.... No, it is not he...."

He dared not call to him. An idea struck him; he began to sing the last bars of Christopher's *Lied:*

"*Auf! Auf!...*" (Up! Up!...)

Christopher rose to it like a fish out of the water, and shouted the following bars at the top of his voice. He turned gladly. His face was red, and there was grass in his hair. They called to each other by name, and ran together. Schulz strode across the ditch by the road; Christopher leaped the fence. They shook hands warmly, and went back to the house laughing and talking loudly. The old man told how he had missed him. Christopher, who a moment before had decided to go away without making any further attempt to see Schulz, was at once conscious of his kindness and simplicity, and began to love him. Before they arrived they had already confided many things to each other.

When they reached the house they found Kunz, who, having learned that Schulz had gone to look for Christopher, was waiting quietly. They were given *café au lait*. But Christopher said that he had breakfasted at an inn. The old man was upset; it was a real grief to him that Christopher's first meal in the place should not have been in his house; such small things were of vast importance to his fond heart. Christopher, who understood him, was amused by it secretly, and loved him the more for it. And to console him he assured him that he had appetite enough for two breakfasts; and he proved his assertion.

All his troubles had gone from his mind; he felt that he was among true friends, and he began to recover. He told them about his journey and his rebuffs in a humorous way; he

looked like a schoolboy on holiday. Schulz beamed, and devoured him with his eyes, and laughed heartily.

It was not long before conversation turned upon the secret bond that united the three of them: Christopher's music. Schulz was longing to hear Christopher play some of his compositions, but he dared not ask him to do so. Christopher was striding about the room and talking. Schulz watched him whenever he went near the open piano, and he prayed inwardly that he might stop at it. The same thought was in Kunz. Their hearts beat when they saw him sit down mechanically on the piano-stool, without stopping talking, and then, without looking at the instrument, run his fingers over the keys at random. As Schulz expected, hardly had Christopher struck a few arpeggios than the sound took possession of him; he went on striking chords and still talking; then there came whole phrases, and then he stopped talking and began to play. The old man exchanged a meaning glance, sly and happy.

"Do you know that?" asked Christopher, playing one of his *Lieder*.

"Do I know it?" said Schulz delightedly.

Christopher said, without stopping, half turning his head:

"Euh! It is not very good. Your piano!"

The old man was very contrite. He begged pardon:

"It is old," he said humbly. "It is like myself."

Christopher turned round and looked at the old man, who seemed to be asking pardon for his age, took both his hands, and laughed. He looked into his honest eyes:

"Oh!" he said, "you are younger than I."

Schulz laughed aloud, and spoke of his old body and his infirmities.

"Tut tut!" said Christopher; "I don't mean that; I know what I am saying. It is true, isn't it, Kunz?"

(They had already suppressed the "*Herr*".)

Kunz agreed emphatically.

Schulz tried to find the same indulgence for his piano.

"It has still some beautiful notes," he said timidly.

And he touched them—four or five notes that were fairly true, half an octave in the middle register of the instrument. Christopher understood that it was an old friend, and he said kindly, thinking of Schulz's eyes:

"Yes. It still has beautiful eyes."

Schulz's face lit up. He launched out on an involved eulogy of his old piano, but he dropped it immediately, for Christopher had begun to play again. *Lieder* followed *Lieder;* Christopher sang them softly. With tears in his eyes, Schulz followed his every movement. With his hands folded on his stomach, Kunz closed his eyes the better to enjoy it. From time to time Christopher turned beaming towards the two old men, who were absolutely delighted, and he said with a naïve enthusiasm at which they never thought of laughing:

"*Hein!* It is beautiful! . . . And this! What do you say about this? . . . And this again! . . . This is the most beautiful of all. . . . Now I will play you something which will make your hair curl. . . ."

As he was finishing a dreamy fragment the cuckoo clock began to call. Christopher started and shouted angrily. Kunz was suddenly awakened, and rolled his eyes fearfully. Even Schulz did not understand at first. Then when he saw Christopher shaking his fist at the calling bird and shouting to someone in the name of Heaven to take the idiot and throw it away, the ventriloquial spectre, he too discovered for the first time in his life that the noise was intolerable; and he took a chair and tried to mount it to take down the spoil-sport. But he nearly fell, and Kunz would not let him try again; he called Salome. She came without hurrying herself, as usual, and was staggered to find the clock thrust into her hands, which Christopher in his impatience had taken down himself.

"What am I to do with it?" she asked.

"Whatever you like. Take it away! Don't let us see it again!" said Schulz, no less impatient than Christopher.

(He wondered how he could have borne such a horror for so long.)

Salome thought that they were surely all cracked.

The music went on. Hours passed. Salome came and announced that dinner was served. Schulz bade her be silent. She came again ten minutes later, then once again, ten minutes after that; this time she was beside herself and boiling with rage, while she tried to look unperturbed; she stood firmly in the middle of the room, and, in spite of Schulz's desperate gestures, she asked in a brazen voice:

"Do the gentlemen prefer to eat their dinners cold or burned? It does not matter to me. I only await your orders."

Schulz was confused by her scolding, and tried to retort; but Christopher burst out laughing. Kunz followed his example, and at length Schulz laughed too. Salome, satisfied with the effect she had produced, turned on her heels with the air of a queen who is graciously pleased to pardon her repentant subjects.

"That's a good creature!" said Christopher, getting up from the piano. "She is right. There is nothing so intolerable as an audience arriving in the middle of a concert."

They sat at table. There was an enormous and delicious repast. Schulz had touched Salome's vanity, and she only asked an excuse to display her art. There was no lack of opportunity for her to exercise it. The old friends were tremendous feeders. Kunz was a different man at table; he expanded like a sun; he would have done well as a sign for a restaurant. Schulz was no less susceptible to good cheer; but his ill-health imposed more restraint upon him. It is true that generally he did not pay much heed to that; and he had to pay for it. In that event he did not complain; if he were ill, at least he knew why. Like Kunz, he had recipes of his own handed down from father to son for generations. Salome was accustomed, therefore, to work for connoisseurs. But on this occasion she had contrived to include all her masterpieces in one menu; it was like an exhibition of the unforgettable cooking of Germany, honest and unsophisticated, with all the scents of all the herbs, and thick sauces, substantial soups, perfect stews, wonderful carp, sauerkraut, geese, plain cakes, aniseed and caraway seed bread. Christopher was in raptures, with his mouth full, and he ate like a ogre; he had the formidable capacity of his father and grandfather, who would have devoured a whole goose. But he could live just as well for a whole week on bread and cheese, and cram when occasion served. Schulz was cordial and cermemonious, and watched him with kind eyes, and plied him with all the wines of the Rhine. Kunz was shining, and hailed him as a brother. Salome's large face was beaming happily. At first she had been deceived when Christopher came. Schulz had spoken about him so much beforehand that she had fancied him as an Excellency, laden with letters and honours. When she saw him she cried out:

"What! Is that all?"

But at table Christopher won her good graces; she had never

seen anybody so splendidly do justice to her talent. Instead of going back to her kitchen, she stayed by the door to watch Christopher, who was saying all sorts of absurd things without missing a bite, and, with her hands on her hips, she roared with laughter. They were all glad and happy. There was only one shadow over their joy: the absence of Pottpetschmidt. They often returned to it.

"Ah! If he were here! How he would eat! How he would drink! How he would sing!"

Their praises of him were inexhaustible.

"If only Christopher could see him! . . . But perhaps he would be able to. Perhaps Pottpetschmidt would return in the evening, tonight at latest . . . ."

"Oh! I shall be gone tonight," said Christopher.

A shadow passed over Schulz's beaming face.

"What! Gone!" he said in a trembling voice. "But you are not going."

"Oh yes," said Christopher gaily. "I must catch the train tonight."

Schulz was in despair. He had counted on Christopher spending the night, perhaps several nights, in his house. He murmured:

"No, no. You can't go! . . ."

Kunz repeated:

"And Pottpetschmidt! . . ."

Christopher looked at the two of them; he was touched by the dismay on their kind friendly faces, and said:

"How good you are! . . . If you like, I will go tomorrow morning."

Schulz took him by the hand.

"Ah!" he said. "How glad I am! Thank you! Thank you!"

He was like a child to whom tomorrow seems so far, so far, that it will not bear thinking on. Christopher was not going today; today was theirs; they would spend the whole evening together; he would sleep under his roof; that was all that Schulz saw; he would not look further.

They became merry again. Schulz rose suddenly, looked very solemn, and exitedly and slowly proposed the toast of their guest, who had given him the immense joy and honour of visiting the little town and his humble house; he drank to his happy return, to his success, to his glory, to every happi-

ness in the world, which with all his heart he wished him. And then he proposed another toast "to noble music"—another to his old friend Kunz—another to Spring—and he did not forget Pottpetschmidt. Kunz, in his turn, drank to Schulz and others, and Christopher, to bring the toasts to an end, proposed the health of Dame Salome, who blushed crimson. Upon that, without giving the orators time to reply, he began a familiar song, which the two old men took up; after that another, and then another for three parts, which was all about friendship and music and wine; the whole was accompanied by loud laughter and the clink of glasses continually touching.

It was half-past three when they got up from the table. They were rather drowsy. Kunz sank into a chair; he was longing to have a sleep. Schulz's legs were worn out by his exertions of the morning and by standing for his toasts. They both hoped that Christopher would sit at the piano again, and go on playing for hours. But the terrible boy, who was in fine form, struck first two or three chords on the piano, shut it abruptly, looked out of the window, and asked if they could not go for a walk until supper. The country attracted him. Kunz showed little enthusiasm, but Schulz at once thought it an excellent idea, and declared that he must show their guest the walk round the *Schönbuchwälder*. Kunz made a face; but he did not protest, and got up with the others; he was as desirous as Schulz of showing Christopher the beauties of the country.

They went out. Christopher took Schulz's arm, and made him walk a little faster than the old man liked. Kunz followed, mopping his brow. They talked gaily. The people standing at their doors watched them pass, and thought that *Herr Professor* Schulz looked like a young man. When they left the town they took to the fields. Kunz complained of the heat. Christopher was merciless, and declared that the air was exquisite. Fortunately for the two old men, they stopped frequently to argue, and they forgot the length of the walk in their conversation. They went into the woods. Schulz recited verses of Goethe and Mörike. Christopher loved poetry, but he could not remember any, and while he listened he stepped into a vague dream in which music replaced the words and made him forget them. He admired Schulz's memory. What a difference there was between the vivacity of mind of this poor

sick old man, almost impotent, shut up in his room for a great part of the year, shut up in his little provincial town almost all his life—and Hassler, young, famous, in the very thick of the artistic movement, and touring over all Europe for his concerts, and yet interested in nothing, and unwilling to know anything! Not only was Schulz in touch with every manifestation of the art of the day that Christopher knew, but he knew an immense amount about musicians of the past and of other countries of whom Christopher had never heard. His memory was a great reservoir in which all the beautiful waters of the heavens were collected. Christopher never wearied of dipping into it, and Schulz was glad of Christopher's interest. He had sometimes found willing listeners or docile pupils, but he had never yet found a young and ardent heart with which he could share his enthusiasm, which sometimes so swelled in him that he was like to choke.

They had become the best friends in the world, when, unhappily, the old man chanced to express his admiration for Brahms. Christopher was at once coldly angry; he dropped Schulz's arm, and said harshly that anyone who loved Brahms could not be his friend. That threw cold water on their happiness. Schulz was too timid to argue, too honest to lie, and murmured and tried to explain. But Christopher stopped him:

"Enough!"

It was so cutting that it was impossible to reply. There was an icy silence. They walked on. The two old men dared not look at each other. Kunz coughed, and tried to take up the conversation again, and to talk of the woods and the weather; but Christopher sulked and would not talk, and only answered with monosyllables. Kunz, finding no response from him, tried to break the silence by talking to Schulz; but Schulz's throat was dry, he could not speak. Christopher watched him out of the corner of his eyes, and he wanted to laugh; he had forgiven him already. He had never been seriously angry with him; he even thought it brutal to make the poor old man sad; but he abused his power, and would not appear to go back on what he had said. They remained so until they left the woods; nothing was to be heard but the weary steps of the two downcast old men; Christopher whistled through his teeth, and pretended not to see them. Suddenly he could bear it no longer.

He burst out laughing, turned towards Schulz, and gripped his arm:

"My dear good old Schulz!" he said, looking at him affectionately. "Isn't it beautiful? Isn't it beautiful?"

He was speaking of the country and the fine day, but his laughing eyes seemed to say:

"You are good. I am a brute. Forgive me! I love you much."

The old man's heart melted. It was as though the sun had shone again after an eclipse. But a short time passed before he could utter a word. Christopher took his arm, and went on talking to him more amiably than ever; in his eagerness he went faster and faster without noticing the strain upon his two companions. Schulz did not complain; he did not even notice his fatigue; he was so happy. He knew that he would have to pay for that day's rashness; but he thought:

"So much the worse for tomorrow! When *he* is gone I shall have plenty of time to rest."

But Kunz, who was not so excited, followed fifteen yards behind, and looked a pitiful object. Christopher noticed it at last. He begged his pardon confusedly, and proposed that they should lie down in a meadow in the shade of the poplars. Of course, Schulz acquiesced without a thought for the effect it might have on his bronchitis. Fortunately, Kunz thought of it for him; or, at least, he made it an excuse for not running any risk from the moisture of the grass when he was in such a perspiration. He suggested that they should take the train back to the town from a station close by. They did so. In spite of their fatigue, they had to hurry, so as not to be late, and they reached the station just as the train came in.

At the sight of them, a big man threw himself out of the door of a carriage, and roared the names of Schulz and Kunz, together with all their titles and qualities, and he waved his arms like a madman. Schulz and Kunz shouted in reply, and also waved their arms; they rushed to the big man's compartment, and he ran to meet them, jostling the people on the platform. Christopher was amazed, and ran after them, asking:

"What is it?"

And the others shouted exultantly:

"It is Pottpetschmidt!"

The name did not convey much to him. He had forgotten the toasts at dinner. Pottpetschmidt in the carriage and Schulz

and Kunz on the step were making a deafening noise; they were marvelling at their encounter. They climbed into the train as it was going. Schulz introduced Christopher. Pottpetschmidt bowed as stiff as a poker, and his features lost all expression; then, when the formalities were over, he caught hold of Christopher's hand, and shook it five or six times, as though he were trying to pull his arm out, and then began to shout again. Christopher was able to make out that he thanked God and his stars for the extraordinary meeting. That did not keep him from slapping his thigh a moment later, and crying out upon the misfortune of having had to go away—he who never went away—just when *Herr Kapellmeister* was coming. Schulz's telegram had only reached him that morning an hour after the train went; he was asleep when it arrived, and they had not thought it worth while to wake him. He had stormed at the hotel people all morning. He was still storming. He had sent his patients away, cut his business appointments, and taken the first train in his haste to return; but the infernal train had missed the connection on the main line. Pottpetschmidt had had to wait three hours at a station; he had exhausted all the expletives in his vocabulary, and fully twenty times had narrated his misadventures to other travellers who were also waiting, and a porter at the station. At last he had started again. He was fearful of arriving too late.... But, thank God! Thank God!...

He took Christopher's hands again, and crushed them in his vast paws with their hairy fingers. He was fabulously stout and tall in proportion; he had a square head, close-cut red hair, a clean-shaven, pock-marked face, big eyes, large nose, thin lips, a double chin, a short neck, a monstrously wide back, a stomach like a barrel, arms thrust out by his body, enormous feet and hands; a gigantic mass of flesh, deformed by excess of eating and drinking; one of those human tobacco-jars that one sees sometimes rolling along the streets in the towns of Bavaria, which keep the secret of that race of men that is produced by a system of gorging similar to that of the Strasbourg geese. He glistened with joy and warmth like a pat of butter, and with his two hands on his outstretched knees, or on those of his neighbours, he never stopped talking, hurling consonants into the air like a catapult, and making them roll along. Occasionally he would have a fit of laughing, which

made him shake all over; he would throw back his head, open his mouth, snorting, gurgling, choking. His laughter would infest Schulz and Kunz, and when it was over they would look at Christopher as they dried their eyes. They seemed to be asking him:

"*Hein!* . . . And what do you say?"

Christopher said nothing; he thought fearfully:

"And this monster sings my music?"

They went home with Schulz. Christopher hoped to avoid Pottpetschmidt's singing, and made no advances in spite of Pottpetschmidt's hints. He was itching to be heard. But Schulz and Kunz were too intent on showing their friend off; Christopher had to submit. He sat at the piano rather ungraciously; he thought:

"My good man, my good man, you don't know what is in store for you; have a care! I will spare you nothing."

He thought that he would hurt Schulz, and he was angry at that; but he was none the less determined to hurt him rather than have this Falstaff murdering his music. He was spared the pain of hurting his old friend; the fat man had an admirable voice. At the first bars Christopher gave a start of surprise. Schulz, who never took his eyes off him, trembled; he thought that Christopher was dissatisfied, and he was only reassured when he saw his face grow brighter and brighter as he went on playing. He was lit up by the reflection of Christopher's delight; and when the song was finished and Christopher turned round and declared that he had never heard any of his songs sung so well, Schulz found a joy in it all sweeter and greater than Christopher's in his satisfaction, sweeter and greater than Pottpetschmidt's in his triumph; for they had only their own pleasure, and Schulz had that of his two friends. They went on with the music. Christopher cried aloud; he could not understand how so ponderous and common a creature could succeed in rendering the idea of his *Lieder*. No doubt, there were not exactly all the shades of meaning, but there was the impulse and the passion which he had never quite succeeded in imparting to professional singers. He looked at Pottpetschmidt, and wondered:

"Does he really feel that?"

But he could not see in his eyes any other light than that of satisfied vanity. Some unconscious force stirred in that solid

flesh. The blind passion was like an army fighting without knowing against whom or why. The spirit of the *Lieder* took possession of it, and it obeyed gladly, for it had need of action; and, left to itself, it never would have known how.

Christopher fancied that on the day of the Creation the Great Sculptor did not take very much trouble to put in order the scattered members of His rough-hewn creatures, and that He had adjusted them anyhow, without bothering to find out whether they were suited to each other, and so every one was made up of all sorts of pieces; and one man was scattered among five or six different men; his brain was with one, his heart with another, and the body belonging to his soul with yet another; the instrument was on one side, the performer on the other. Certain creatures remained like wonderful violins, for ever shut up in their cases, for want of anyone with the art to play them. And those who were fit to play them were found all their lives to put up with wretched scraping fiddles. He had all the more reason for thinking so as he was furious with himself for never having been able properly to sing a page of music. He had an untuneful voice, and could never hear himself without disgust.

However, intoxicated by his success, Pottpetschmidt began to "put expression" into Christopher's *Lieder*—that is to say, he substituted his own for Christopher's. Naturally he did not think that the music gained by the change, and he grew gloomy. Schulz saw it. His lack of the critical faculty and his admiration for his friends would not have allowed him of his own accord to set it down to Pottpetschmidt's bad taste. But his affection for Christopher made him perceptive of the young man's finest shades of thought; he was no longer in himself, he was in Christopher; and he, too, suffered from Pottpetschmidt's affectations. He tried hard to stop his going down that perilous slope. It was not easy to silence Pottpetschmidt. Schulz found it enormously difficult, when the singer had exhausted Christopher's repertoire, to keep him from breaking out into the lucubrations of mediocre composers, at the mention of whose names Christopher curled up and bristled like a porcupine.

Fortunately, the announcement of supper muzzled Pottpetschmidt. Another field for his valour was opened for him; he had no rival there; and Christopher, who was a little weary

with his exploits in the afternoon, made no attempt to vie with him.

It was getting late. They sat round the table, and the three friends watched Christopher; they drank in his words. It seemed very strange to Christopher to find himself in the remote little town among these old men whom he had never seen until that day, and to be more intimate with them than if they had been his relations. He thought how fine it would be for an artist if he could know of the unknown friends whom his ideas find in the world—how gladdened his heart would be, and how fortified he would be in his strength! But he is rarely that; everyone lives and dies alone, fearing to say what he feels the more he feels, and the more he needs to express it. Vulgar flatterers have no difficulty in speaking. Those who love most have to force their lips open to say that they love. And so he must be grateful indeed to those who dare to speak; they are unconsciously collaborators with the artist. Christopher was filled with gratitude for old Schulz. He did not confound him with his two friends; he felt that he was the soul of the little group; the others were only reflections of that living fire of goodness and love. The friendship that Kunz and Pottpetschmidt had for him was very different. Kunz was selfish; music gave him a comfortable satisfaction, like a fat cat when it is stroked. Pottpetschmidt found in it the pleasure of tickled vanity and physical exercise. Neither of them troubled to understand him. But Schulz absolutely forgot himself; he loved.

It was late. The two friends went away into the night. Christopher was left alone with Schulz. He said:

"Now I will play for you alone."

He sat at the piano and played—as he knew how to play when he had someone dear to him by his side. He played his latest compositions. The old man was in ecstasies. He sat near Christopher, and never took his eyes from him, and held his breath. In the goodness of his heart, he was incapable of keeping the smallest happiness to himself, and, in spite of himself, he said:

"Ah! What a pity Kunz is not here!"

That irritated Christopher a little.

An hour passed; Christopher was still playing; they had not exchanged a word. When Christopher had finished neither

spoke a word. There was silence; the house, the street, was asleep. Christopher turned, and saw that the old man was weeping; he got up, and went and embraced him. They talked in whispers in the stillness of the night. The clock ticked dully in the next room. Schulz talked in a whisper, with his hands clasped, and leaning forward; he was telling Christopher, in answer to his questions, about his life and his sorrow; at every turn he was ashamed of complaining, and had to say:

"I am wrong.... I have no right to complain.... Everybody has been very good to me...."

And, indeed, he was not complaining; it was only an involuntary melancholy emanating from the dull story of his lonely life. At the most sorrowful moments he wove into it professions of faith vaguely idealistic and very sentimental, which amazed Christopher, though it would have been too cruel to contradict him. At bottom there was in Schulz not so much a firm belief as a passionate desire to believe—an uncertain hope to which he clung as to a buoy. He sought the confirmation of it in Christopher's eyes. Christopher understood the appeal in the eyes of his friend, who clung to him with touching confidence, imploring him, and dictating his answer. Then he spoke of the calm faith of strength, sure of itself, words which the old man was expecting, and they comforted him. The old man and the young had forgotten the years that lay between them; they were near each other, like brothers of the same age, loving and helping each other; the weaker the support of the stronger; the old man took refuge in the young man's soul.

They parted after midnight; Christopher had to get up early to catch the train by which he had come. And so he did not loiter as he undressed. The old man had prepared his guest's room as though for a visit of several months. He had put a bowl of roses on the table, and a branch of laurel. He had put fresh blotting-paper on the bureau. During the morning he had had an upright piano carried up. On the shelf by the bed he had placed books chosen from among his most precious and beloved. There was no detail that he had not lovingly thought out. But it was a waste of trouble; Christopher saw nothing. He flung himself on his bed, and went sound asleep at once.

Schulz could not sleep. He was pondering the joy that he

had had, and the sorrow he must have at the departure of his friend. He was turning over in his mind the words that had been spoken. He was thinking that his dear Christopher was sleeping near him on the other side of the wall against which his bed lay. He was worn out, stiff all over, depressed; he felt that he had caught cold during the walk, and that he was going to have a relapse; but he had only one thought:

"If only I can hold out until he has gone!" And he was fearful of having a fit of coughing and waking Christopher. He was full of gratitude to God, and began to compose verses to the song of old Simeon: "*Nunc dimittis . . .*" He got up in a sweat to write the verses down, and sat at his desk until he had carefully copied them out with an affectionate dedication, and his signature, and the date and hour. Then he lay down again with a shiver, and could not get warm all night.

Dawn came. Schulz thought regretfully of the dawn of the day before. But he was angry with himself for spoiling with such thoughts the few minutes of happiness left to him; he knew that on the morrow he would regret the time fleeting then, and he tried not to waste any of it. He listened, eager for the first sound in the next room. But Christopher did not stir. He lay still just as he had gone to bed; he had not moved. Half-past six rang, and he still slept. Nothing would have been easier than to make him miss the train, and doubtless he would have taken it with a laugh. But the old man was too scrupulous to use a friend so without his consent. In vain did he say to himself:

"It will not be my fault. I could not help it. It will be enough to say nothing. And if he does not wake in time I shall have another whole day with him."

He answered himself:

"No, I have no right."

And he thought it his duty to go and wake him. He knocked at his door. Christopher did not hear at first; he had to knock again. That made the old man's heart thump as he thought: "Ah! How well he sleeps! He would stay like that till midday! . . ."

At last Christopher replied gaily through the partition. When he learned the time he cried out; he was heard bustling about his room, noisily dressing himself, singing scraps of melody, while he chattered with Schulz through the wall and

cracked jokes, while the old man laughed in spite of his sorrow. The door opened; Christopher appeared, fresh, rested, and happy; he had no thought of the pain he was causing. In reality there was no hurry for him to go; it would have cost him nothing to stay a few days longer, and it would have given Schulz so much pleasure! But Christopher could not know that. Besides, although he was very fond of the old man, he was glad to go; he was worn out by the day of perpetual conversation, by these people who clung to him in desperate fondness. And then he was young; he thought there would be plenty of time to meet again; he was not going to the other ends of the earth! The old man knew that he would soon be much farther than the other ends of the earth, and he looked at Christopher for all eternity.

In spite of his extreme weariness, he took him to the station. A fine cold rain was falling noiselessly. At the station, when he opened his purse, Christopher found that he had not enough money to buy his ticket home. He knew that Schulz would gladly lend him the money, but he would not ask him for it.... Why? Why deny those who love you the opportunity—the happiness of doing you a service? ...He would not out of discretion—perhaps out of vanity. He took a ticket for a station on the way, saying that he would do the rest of the journey on foot.

The time for leaving came. They embraced on the footboard of the carriage. Schulz slipped the poem he had written during the night into Christopher's hand. He stayed on the platform below the compartment. They had nothing more to say to each other, as usual when good-byes are too long drawn out, but Schulz's eyes went on speaking; they never left Christopher's face until the train went.

The carriage disappeared round a curve. Schulz was left alone. He went back by the muddy path; he dragged along; suddenly he felt all his weariness, the cold, the melancholy of the rainy day. He was hardly able to reach home and to go upstairs again. Hardly had he reached his room than he was seized with an attack of asthma and coughing. Salome came to his aid. Through his involuntary groans he said:

"What luck! ... What luck that I was prepared for it! ..." He felt very ill. He went to bed. Salome fetched the doctor. In bed he became as limp as a rag. He could not move; only

his breast was heaving and panting like a bellows. His head was heavy and feverish. He spent the whole day in living through the day before, minute by minute; he tormented himself, and then was angry with himself for complaining after so much happiness. With his hands clasped and his heart big with love, he thanked God.

Christopher was comforted by his day, and restored to confidence in himself by the affection that he had left behind him; so he returned home. When he had gone as far as his ticket would take him, he got out blithely and took to the road on foot. He had sixty kilometres to do. He was in no hurry, and dawdled like a schoolboy. It was April. The country was not very far on. The leaves were unfolding like little wrinkled hands at the ends of the black branches; the apple trees were in flower, and along the hedges the frail eglantine smiled. Above the leafless forest, where a soft greenish down was beginning to appear, on the summit of a little hill, like a trophy on the end of a lance, there rose an old Romantic castle. Three black clouds sailed across the soft blue sky. Shadows chased over the country in spring, showers passed, then the bright sun shone forth again, and the birds sang.

Christopher found that for some time he had been thinking of Uncle Gottfried. He had not thought of the poor man for a long time, and he wondered why the memory of him should so obstinately obsess him now; he was haunted by it as he walked along a path along a canal that reflected the poplars; and the image of his uncle was so actual that as he turned a great wall he thought he saw him coming towards him.

The sky grew dark. A heavy downpour of rain and hail fell, and thunder rumbled in the distance. Christopher was near a village; he could see its pink walls and red roofs among the clumps of trees. He hurried and took shelter under the projecting roof of the nearest house. The hailstones came lashing down; they rang out on the tiles, and fell down into the street like pieces of lead. The ruts were overflowing. Above the blossoming orchards a rainbow flung its brilliant garish scarf over the dark blue clouds.

On the threshold a girl was standing knitting. She asked Christopher to enter. He accepted the invitation. The room into which he stepped was used as a kitchen, a dining-room,

and a bedroom. At the back a stew-pot hung over a great fire. A peasant woman who was cleaning vegetables wished Christopher good day, and bade him go near the fire to dry himself. The girl fetched a bottle of wine, and gave him to drink. She sat on the other side of the table, and went on knitting, while at the same time she looked after two children who were playing at tickling each other's necks with those grasses which are known in the country as "thieves" or "sweeps". She began to talk to Christopher. It was only after a moment that he saw that she was blind. She was not pretty. She was a big girl, with red cheeks, white teeth, and strong arms, but her features were irregular; she had the smiling, rather expressionless air of many blind people, and also their mania for talking of things and people as though they could see them. At first Christopher was startled, and wondered if she were making fun of him when she said that he looked well and that the country was looking very pretty. But after glancing from the blind girl to the woman who was cleaning the vegetables he saw that nobody was surprised, and that it was no joke (there was nothing to joke about, indeed). The two women asked Christopher friendly questions as to whither he was going and whence he had come. The blind girl joined in the conversation with a rather exaggerated eagerness; she agreed with, or commented on, Christopher's remarks about the road and the fields. Naturally her observations were often wide of the mark. She seemed to be trying to pretend that she could see as well as he.

Other members of the family came in: a healthy peasant of thirty and his young wife. Christopher talked to them all, and watched the clearing sky, waiting for the moment to set out again. The blind girl hummed an air while she plied her knitting-needles. The air brought back all sorts of old memories to Christopher.

"What!" he said. "You know that." (Gottfried had taught her it.)

He hummed the following notes. The girl began to laugh. She sang the first half of the phrases, and he finished them. He had just got up to go and look at the weather, and he was walking round the room, mechanically taking stock of every corner of it, when near the dresser he saw an object which him start. It was a long twisted stick, the handle of which was

roughly carved to represent a little bent man bowing. Christopher knew it well; he had played with it as a child. He pounced on the stick, and asked in a choking voice:

"Where did you get this? . . . Where did you get it?"

The man looked up and said:

"A friend left it here—an old friend who is dead."

Christopher cried:

"Gottfried?"

They all turned and asked:

"How do you know . . .?"

And when Christopher told them that Gottfried was his uncle, they were all greatly excited. The blind girl got up; her ball of wool rolled across the room; she stopped her work, and took Christopher's hands, and said in a great state of emotion:

"You are his nephew?"

They all talked at once. Christopher asked:

"But how . . . how do you come to know him?"

The man replied:

"It was here that he died."

They sat down again, and when the excitement had subsided a little, the mother told, as she went on with her work, that Gottfried used to go to the house for many years; he always used to stay there on his way to and from his journeys. The last time he came (it was last July) he seemed very tired, and when he took off his pack it was some time before he could speak a word; but they did not take any notice of it, because they were used to seeing him like that when he arrived, and knew that he was short of breath. He did not complain, either. He never used to complain; he always used to find some happiness in the most unpleasant things. When he was doing some exhausting work he used to be glad thinking how good it would be in bed at night; and when he was ill he used to say how good it would be when he was not ill any longer. . . .

"And, sir, it is wrong to be always content," added the woman; "for if you are not sorry for yourself, nobody will pity you. I always complain. . . ."

Well, nobody had paid any attention to him. They had even chaffed him about looking so well, and Modesta (that was the blind girl's name), who had just relieved him of his

pack, asked him if he was never going to be tired of running like a young man. He smiled in reply, for he could not speak. He sat on the seat by the door. Everybody went about their work—the men to the fields, the woman to her cooking. Modesta went near the seat; she stood leaning against the door with her knitting in her hands, and talked to Gottfried. He did not reply; she did not ask him for any reply, and told him everything that had happened since his last visit. He breathed with difficulty, and she heard him trying hard to speak. Instead of being anxious about him, she said:

"Don't speak. Just rest. You shall talk presently.... How can people tire themselves out like that!..."

And then he did not talk, or even try to talk. She went on with her story, thinking that he was listening. He sighed, and said nothing. When the mother came a little later she found Modesta still talking and Gottfried motionless on the seat, with his head flung back facing the sky; for some minutes Modesta had been talking to a dead man. She understood then that the poor man had been trying to say a few words before he died, but had not been able to; then, with his sad smile, he had accepted that, and had closed his eyes in the peace of the summer evening....

The rain had ceased. The daughter-in-law went to the stables; the son took his mattock, and cleared the little gutter in front of the door which the mud had obstructed. Modesta had disappeared at the beginning of the story. Christopher was left alone in the room with the mother, and was silent and much moved. The old woman, who was rather talkative, could not bear a prolonged silence, and she began to tell him the whole history of her acquaintance with Gottfried. It went far back. When she was quite young Gottfried loved her. He dared not tell her, but it became a joke; she made fun of him, everybody made fun of him—it was the custom wherever he went. Gottfried used to come faithfully every year. It seemed natural to him that people should make fun of him—natural that she should have married and been happy with another man. She had been too happy; she had boasted too much of her happiness; then unhappiness came. Her husband died suddenly. Then his daughter—a fine strong girl whom everybody admired, who was to be married to the son of the richest farmer of the district—lost her sight as the result of an accident.

One day when she had climbed to the great pear tree behind the house to pick the fruit, the ladder slipped as she fell, a broken branch struck her near the eye. At first it was thought that she would escape with a scar, but later she had had unceasing pains in her forehead; one eye lost its sight, then the other; and all their remedies had been useless. Of course, the marriage was broken off; her betrothed had vanished, without any explanation, and of all the young men who a month before had actually fought for a dance with her, not one had the courage (it is quite comprehensible) to take a blind girl to his arms. And so Modesta, who till then had been careless and gay, had fallen into such despair that she wanted to die. She refused to eat; she did nothing but weep from morning till evening, and during the night they used to hear her still moaning in her bed. They did not know what to do; they could only join her in her despair; and she only wept the more. At last they lost patience with her moaning; then they scolded her, and she talked of throwing herself into the canal. The minister would come sometimes; he would talk of the good God, and eternal things, and the merit she was gaining for the next world by bearing her sorrows; but that did not console her at all. One day Gottfried came. Modesta had never been very kind to him. Not that she was naturally unkind, but she was disdainful, and, besides, she never thought; she loved to laugh, and there was no malice in what she said or did to him. When he heard of her misfortune he was as overwhelmed by it as though he were a member of the family. However, he did not let her see it the first time he saw her. He went and sat by her side, made no allusion to her accident, and began to talk quietly, as he had always done before. He had no word of pity for her; he even seemed not to notice that she was blind. Only he never talked to her of things she could not see; he talked to her about what she could hear or notice in her blindness; and he did it quite simply, as though it were a natural thing; it was as though he, too, were blind. At first she did not listen, and went on weeping. But next day she listened better, and even talked to him a little. . . .

"And," the woman went on, "I do not know what he can have said to her; for we were haymaking, and I was too busy to notice her. But in the evening, when we came in from the fields, we found her talking quietly. And after that she went

on getting better. She seemed to forget her affliction. But every now and then she would think of it again; she would weep alone, or try to talk to Gottfried of sad things; but he seemed not to hear, or he would not reply in the same tone; he would go on talking gravely or merrily of things which soothed and interested her. At last he persuaded her to go out of the house, which she had never left since her accident. He made her go a few yards round the garden at first, and then for a longer distance in the fields. And at last she learned to find her way everywhere and to make out everything as though she could see. She even noticed things to which we never pay any attention, and she is interested in everything, whereas before she was never interested in much outside herself. That time Gottfried stayed with us longer than usual. We dared not ask him to postpone his departure, but he stayed of his own accord until he saw that she was calmer. And one day—she was out there in the yard—I heard her laughing. I cannot tell you what an effect that had on me. Gottfried looked happy too. He was sitting near me. We looked at each other, and I am not ashamed to tell you, sir, that I kissed him with all my heart. Then he said to me:

"'Now I think I can go. I am not needed any more.'

"I tried to keep him, but he said:

"'No. I must go now. I cannot stay any longer.'

"Everybody knew that he was like the Wandering Jew: he could not stay anywhere; we did not insist. Then he went, but he arranged to come here more often, and every time it was a great joy for Modesta; she was always better after his visits. She began to work in the house again; her brother married; she looks after the children; and now she never complains, and always looks happy. I sometimes wonder if she would be so happy if she had her two eyes. Yes, indeed, sir, there are days when I think that it would be better to be like her, and not to see certain ugly people and certain evil things. The world is growing very ugly; it grows worse every day.... And yet I should be very much afraid of God taking me at my word, and for my part I would rather go on seeing the world, ugly as it is...."

Modesta came back, and the conversation changed. Christopher wished to go now that the weather was fair again, but they would not let him. He had to agree to stay to supper and

to spend the night with them. Modesta sat near Christopher, and did not leave him all the evening. He would have liked to talk intimately to the girl, whose lot filled him with pity, but she gave him no opportunity. She would only try to ask him about Gottfried. When Christopher told her certain things she did not know, she was happy and a little jealous. She was a little unwilling to talk of Gottfried herself; it was apparent that she did not tell everything, and when she did tell everything she was sorry for it at once; her memories were her property—she did not like sharing them with another; in her affection she was as eager as a peasant woman in her attachment to her land; it hurt her to think that anybody could love Gottfried as much as she. It is true that she refused to believe it, and Christopher, understanding, left her that satisfaction. As he listened to her, he saw that, although she had seen Gottfried, and had even seen him with indulgent eyes, since her blindness she had made of him an image absolutely different from the reality, and she had transferred to the phantom of her mind all the hunger for love that was in her. Nothing had disturbed her illusion. With the bold certainty of the blind, who calmly invent what they do not know, she said to Christopher:

"You are like him."

He understood that for years she had grown used to living in a house with closed shutters through which the truth could not enter. And now that she had learned to see in the darkness that surrounded her, and even to forget the darkness, perhaps she would have been afraid of a ray of light filtering through the gloom. With Christopher she recalled a number of rather silly trivialities in a smiling and disjointed conversation in which Christopher could not be at his ease. He was irritated by her chatter; he could not understand how a creature who had suffered so much had not become more serious in her suffering, and he could not find tolerance for such futility; every now and then he tried to talk of graver things, but they found no echo; Modesta could not—or would not—follow him.

They went to bed. It was long before Christopher could sleep. He was thinking of Gottfried, and trying to disengage him from the image of Modesta's childish memories. He found it difficult, and was irritated. His heart ached at the thought

that Gottfried had died there, and that his body had no doubt lain in that very bed. He tried to live through the agony of his last moments, when he could neither speak nor make the blind girl understand, and had closed his eyes in death. He longed to have been able to raise his eyelids and to read the thoughts hidden under them—the mystery of that soul which had gone without making itself known, perhaps even without knowing itself! It never tried to know itself, and all its wisdom lay in not desiring wisdom, or in not trying to impose its will on circumstance, but in abandoning itself to the force of circumstance, in accepting it and loving it. So he assimilated the mysterious essence of the world without even thinking of it. And if he had done so much good to the blind girl, to Christopher, and doubtless to many others who would be for ever unknown, it was because, instead of bringing the customary words of the revolt of man against Nature, he brought something of the indifferent peace of Nature, and reconciled the submissive soul with her. He did good like the fields, the woods, all Nature with which he was impregnated. Christopher remembered the evenings he had spent with Gottfried in the country, his walks as a child, the stories and songs in the night. He remembered also the last walk he had taken with his uncle, on the hill above the town, on a cold winter's morning, and the tears came to his eyes once more. He did not try to sleep, so as to remain with his memories. He did not wish to lose one moment of that night in the little place, filled with the soul of Gottfried, to which he had been led as though impelled by some unknown force. But while he lay listening to the irregular trickling of the water and the shrill cries of the bats, the healthy fatigue of youth mastered his will, and he fell asleep.

When he awoke the sun was shining: everybody on the farm was already at work. In the hall he found only the old woman and the children. The young couple were in the fields, and Modesta had gone to milk. They looked for her in vain. She was nowhere to be found. Christopher said he would not wait for her return. He did not much want to see her, and he said that he was in a hurry. He set out after telling the old woman to bid the others good-bye for him.

As he was leaving the village at a turn of the road, he saw the blind girl sitting on a bank under a hawthorn hedge. She

got up as she heard him coming, approached him smiling, took his hand, and said:

"Come."

They climbed up through meadows to a little shady flowering field filled with tombstones, which looked down on the village. She led him to a grave, and said:

"He is there."

They both knelt down. Christopher remembered another grave by which he had knelt with Gottfried, and he thought:

"Soon it will be my turn."

But there was no sadness in his thought. A great peace was ascending from the earth. Christopher leaned over the grave, and said in a whisper to Gottfried:

"Enter into me! . . ."

Modesta was praying, with her hands clasped and her lips moving in silence. Then she went round the grave on her knees, feeling the ground and the grass and the flowers with her hands. She seemed to caress them; her quick fingers seemed to see. They gently plucked the dead stalks of the ivy and the faded violets. She laid her hand on the stone to get up. Christopher saw her fingers pass furtively over Gottfried's name, lightly touching each letter.

She said:

"The earth is sweet this morning."

She held out her hand to him. He gave her his. She made him touch the moist warm earth. He did not loose her hand. Their locked fingers plunged into the earth. He kissed Modesta. She kissed him, too.

They both rose to their feet. She held out to him a few fresh violets she had gathered, and put the faded ones into her bosom. They dusted their knees, and left the cemetery without a word. In the fields the larks were singing. White butterflies danced about their heads. They sat down in a meadow a few yards away from each other. The smoke of the village was ascending direct to the sky, that was washed by the rain. The still canal glimmered between the poplars. A gleaming blue mist wrapped the meadows and woods in its folds.

Modesta broke the silence. She spoke in a whisper of the beauty of the day as though she could see it. She drank in the air through her half-open lips; she listened for the sounds of creatures and things. Christopher also knew the worth of such

music. He said what she was thinking and could not have said. He named certain of the cries and imperceptible tremors that they could hear in the grass, in the depths of the air. She said:

"Ah! You see that, too?"

He replied that Gottfried had taught him to distinguish them.

"You, too?" she said a little crossly.

He wanted to say to her: "Do not be jealous," but he saw the Divine light smiling all about them: he looked at her blind eyes, and was filled with pity.

"So," he asked, "it was Gottfried taught you?"

She said "Yes," and that they gave her more delight than ever before.... She did not say before "what". She never mentioned the words "eyes" or "blind".

They were silent for a moment. Christopher looked at her in pity. She felt that he was looking at her. He would have liked to tell her how much he pitied her. He would have liked her to complain, to confide in him. He asked kindly:

"You have been very unhappy?"

She sat dumb and unyielding. She plucked the blades of grass, and munched them in silence. After a few moments—the song of a lark was going farther and farther from them in the sky—Christopher told her how he too had been unhappy, and how Gottfried had helped him. He told her all his sorrows, his trials, as though he were thinking aloud or talking to a sister. The blind girl's face lit up as he told his story, which she followed eagerly. Christopher watched her, and saw that she was on the point of speaking. She made a movement to come near him and hold his hand. He moved, too—but already she had relapsed into her impassiveness, and when he had finished, she only replied with a few banal words. Behind her broad forehead, on which there was not a line, there was the obstinacy of a peasant, hard as a stone. She said that she must go home to look after her brother's children. She talked of them with a calm smile.

He asked her:

"You are happy?"

She seemed to be more happy to hear him say the word. She said she was happy, and insisted on the reasons she had for being so: she was trying to persuade herself and him that

it was so. She spoke of the children, and the house, and all that she had to do ....

"Oh yes," she said, "I am very happy!"

Christopher did not reply. She rose to go. He rose too. They said good-bye gaily and carelessly. Modesta's hand trembled a little in Christopher's. She said:

"You will have fine weather for your walk today." And she told him of a crossroads where he must not go wrong. It was as though, of the two, Christopher were the blind one.

They parted. He went down the hill. When he reached the bottom he turned. She was standing at the summit in the same place. She waved her handkerchief and made signs to him as though she saw him.

There was something heroic and absurd in her obstinacy in denying her misfortune, something which touched Christopher and hurt him. He felt how worthy Modesta was of pity, and even of admiration, and he could not have lived two days with her. As he went his way between flowering hedges, he thought of dear old Schulz, and his old eyes, bright and tender, before which so many sorrows had passed which they refused to see, for they would not see hurtful realities.

"How does he see me, I wonder?" thought Christopher. "I am so different from his idea of me! To him I am what he wants me to be. Everything is in his own image, pure and noble like himself. He could not bear life if he saw it as it is."

And he thought of the girl living in darkness who denied the darkness, and tried to pretend that what was was not, and that what was not was.

Then he saw the greatness of German idealism, which he had so often loathed because in vulgar souls it is a source of hypocrisy and stupidity. He saw the beauty of the faith which begets a world within the world, different from the world, like a little island in the ocean. But he could not bear such a faith for himself, and refused to take refuge upon such an Island of the Dead. Life! Truth! He would not be a lying hero. Perhaps that optimistic lie which a German Emperor tried to make law for all his people was indeed necessary for weak creatures if they were to live. And Christopher would have thought it a crime to snatch from such poor wretches the illusion which upheld them. But for himself he never could have recourse to such subterfuges. He would rather die than

live by illusion. Was not art also an illusion? No, it must not be. Truth! Truth! Eyes wide open, let him draw in through every pore the all-puissant breath of life, see things as they are, squarely face his misfortunes—and laugh.

Several months passed. Christopher had lost all hope of escaping from the town. Hassler, the only man who could have saved him, had refused to help him. And old Schulz's friendship had been taken from him almost as soon as it had been given.

He had written once on his return, and he had received two affectionate letters, but from sheer laziness, and especially because of the difficulty he had expressing himself in a letter, he delayed thanking him for his kind words. He put off writing from day to day. And when at last he made up his mind to write he had a word from Kunz announcing the death of his old friend. Schulz had had a relapse of his bronchitis which had developed into pneumonia. He had forbidden them to bother Christopher, of whom he was always talking. In spite of his extreme weakness and many years of illness, he was not spared a long and painful end. He had charged Kunz to convey the tidings to Christopher, and to tell him that he had thought of him up to the last hour; that he thanked him for all the happiness he owed him, and that his blessing would be on Christoper as long as he lived. Kunz did not tell him that the day with Christopher had probably been the reason of his relapse and the cause of his death.

Christopher wept in silence, and he felt then all the worth of the friend he had lost, and how much he loved him, and he was grieved not to have told him more of how he loved him. It was too late now. And what was left to him? The good Schulz had only appeared enough to make the void seem more empty, the night more black, after he ceased to be. As for Kunz and Pottpetschmidt, they had no value outside the friendship they had for Schulz, and Schulz for them. Christopher valued them at their proper worth. He wrote to them once, and their relation ended there. He tried also to write to Modesta, but she answered with a commonplace letter in which, she spoke only of trivialities. He gave up the correspondence. He wrote to nobody, and nobody wrote to him.

Silence. Silence. From day to day the heavy cloak of silence

descended upon Christopher. It was like a rain of ashes falling on him. It seemed already to be evening, and Christopher was losing his hold on life. He would not resign himself to that. The hour of sleep was not yet come. He must live.

And he could not live in Germany. The sufferings of his genius, cramped by the narrowness of the little town, lashed him into injustice. His nerves were raw: everything drew blood. He was like one of those wretched wild animals who perished of boredom in the holes and cages in which they were imprisoned in the *Stadtgarten* (town gardens). Christopher used often to go and look at them in sympathy. He used to look at their wonderful eyes, in which there burned—or every day grew fainter—a fierce and desperate fire. Ah! how they would have loved the brutal bullet, which sets free, or the knife that strikes into their bleeding hearts! Anything rather than the savage indifference of those men who prevented them from either living or dying!

Not the hostility of the people was the hardest for Christopher to bear, but their inconsistency, their formless, shallow natures. There was no knowing how to take them. The pig-headed opposition of one of those stiff-necked, hard races who refuse to understand any new thought were much better. Against force it is possible to oppose force—the pick and the mine, which hew away and blow up the hard rock. But what can be done against an amorphous mass which gives like a jelly, collapses under the least pressure, and retains no imprint of it? All thought and energy and everything disappeared in the slough. When a stone fell, there were hardly more than a few ripples quivering on the surface of the gulf: the monster opened and shut its maw, and there was left no trace of what had been.

They were not enemies. Dear God! if only they had been enemies! They were people who had not the strength to love or hate, or believe or disbelieve—in religion, in art, in politics, in daily life; and all their energies were expended in trying to reconcile the irreconcilable. Especially since the German victories they had been striving to make a compromise, a revolting intrigue between their new power and their old principles. The old idealism had not been renounced. There should have been a new effort of freedom of which they were incapable. They were content with a forgery, with making it

subservient to German interests. Like the serene and subtle Schwabian, Hegel, who had waited until after Leipzig and Waterloo to assimilate the cause of his philosophy with the Prussian State—their interests having changed, their principles had changed, too. When they were defeated, they said that Germany's ideal was humanity. Now that they had defeated others, they said that Germany was the ideal of humanity. When other countries were more powerful, they said, with Lessing, that "*patriotism is a heroic weakness which it is well to be without,*" and they called themselves "*citizens of the world.*" Now that they were in the ascendant, they could not enough despise the Utopias "*à la Française*". Universal peace, fraternity, pacific progress, the rights of man, natural equality: they said that the strongest people had absolute rights against the others, and that the others, being weaker, had no rights against themselves. It was the living God and the Incarnate Idea, the progress of which is accomplished by war, violence, and oppression. Force had become holy now that it was on their side. Force had become the only idealism and the only intelligence.

In truth, Germany had suffered so much for centuries from having idealism and no fame that she had every excuse, after so many trials, for making the sorrowful confession that at all costs Force must be hers. But what bitterness was hidden in such a confession from the people of Herder and Goethe! And what an abdication was the German victory, what a degradation of the German ideal! Alas! there were only too many facilities for such an abdication in the deplorable tendency even of the best Germans to submit.

"*The chief characteristic of Germany,*" said Moser, more than a century ago, "*is obedience.*" And Madame de Staël:

"*They have submitted doughtily. They find philosophic reasons for explaining the least philosophic theory in the world: respect for power and the chastening emotion of fear which changes that respect into admiration.*"

Christopher found that feeling everywhere in Germany, from the highest to the lowest—from the William Tell of Schiller, that limited little bourgeois with muscles like a porter, who, as the free Jew Börne says, "*to reconcile honour and fear passes before the pillar of dear Herr Gessler, with his eyes down, so as to be able to say that he did not see the hat;*

did not disobey"—to the aged and respectable Professor Weisse, a man of seventy, and one of the most honoured men of learning in the town, who, when he saw a *Herr Lieutenant* coming, would make haste to give him the path, and would step down into the road. Christopher's blood boiled whenever he saw one of these small acts of daily servility. They hurt him as much as though he had demeaned himself. The arrogant manners of the officers whom he met in the street, their haughty insolence, made him speechless with anger. He never would make way for them. Whenever he passed them he returned their arrogant stare. More than once he was very near causing a scene. He seemed to be looking for trouble. However, he was the first to understand the futility of such bravado; but he had moments of aberration, the perpetual constraint which he imposed on himself, and the accumulation of force in him that had no outlet, made him furious. Then he was ready to go any lengths, and he had a feeling that if he stayed a year longer in the place he would be lost. He loathed the brutal militarism which he felt weighing down upon him, the sabres clanking on the pavement, the piles of arms, and the guns placed outside the barracks, their muzzles gaping down on the town, ready to fire. Scandalous novels, which were then making a great stir, denounced the corruption of the garrisons, great and small: the officers were represented as mischievous creatures, who, outside their automatic duties, were only idle, and spent their time in drinking, gambling, getting into debt, living on their families, slandering one another, and from top to bottom of the hierarchy they abused their authority at the expense of their inferiors. The idea that he would one day have to obey them stuck in Christopher's throat. He could not—no, he could never bear it, and lose his own self-respect by submitting to their humiliations and injustice.... He had no idea of the moral strength in some of them, or of all that they might be suffering themselves: lost illusions, so much strength and youth and honour and faith, and passionate desire for sacrifice, turned to ill account and spoiled—the pointlessness of a career, which, if it is only a career, if it has not sacrifice as its end, is only a pointless activity, an inept display, a ritual which is recited without belief in the words that are said....

His country was not enough for Christopher. He felt in

himself that unknown force which wakes suddenly, irresistibly, in certain species of birds, at definite times, like the ebb and flow of the tides: the instinct of the great migrations. As he read the volumes of Herder and Fichte which old Schulz had left him, he found souls like his own, not "*sons of the soil*," slavishly bound to the earth, but "*spirits, sons of the sun*," turning invincibly to the light whencesoever it comes.

Whither should he go? He did not know. But instinctively his eyes turned to the Latin South. And first to France—France, the eternal refuge of Germany in distress. How often had German thought turned to France, without ceasing to slander her! Ever since '70, what an attraction emanated from the town which had been shattered and smoking under the German guns! The most revolutionary and the most reactionary forms of thought and art had found alternately and sometimes together example and inspiration there. Like so many other great German musicians in distress, Christopher turned towards Paris.... What did he know of the French? Two women's faces and some chance reading. That was enough for him to imagine a country of light, of gaiety, of courage, and even of a little Gallic boasting, which does not sort ill with the bold youth of the heart. He believed it all, because he needed to believe it all, because, with all his soul, he would have liked it to be so.

He made up his mind to go. But he could not go, because of his mother.

Louisa was growing old. She adored her son, who was her only joy, and she was all that he most loved on earth. And yet they were always hurting each other. She hardly understood Christopher, and did not try to understand him. She was only concerned to love him. She had a narrow, timid, dull mind, and a fine heart; an immense need of loving and being loved in which there was something touching and sad. She respected her son, because he seemed to her to be very learned; but she did all she could to stifle his genius. She thought he would stay all his life with her in their little town. They had lived together for years, and she could not imagine that he would not always be the same. She was happy: why should he not be happy, too? All her dreams for him soared no higher than seeing him married to the daughter of some prosperous

citizen of the town, hearing him play the organ at church on Sundays, and never having him leave her. She regarded her son as though he were still twelve years old. She would have liked him never to be more than that. Innocently she inflicted torture on the unhappy man, who was suffocated in that narrow world.

And yet there was much truth—moral greatness—in that unconscious philosophy of the mother, who could not understand ambition, and saw all the happiness of life in the family affections and the accomplishment of humble duties. She was a creature who wished to love, and only to love. Sooner renounce life, reason, logic, the material world, everything, rather than love! And that love was infinite, suppliant, exacting: it gave everything—it wished to be given everything; it renounced life for love, and it desired that renunciation from others, from the beloved. What a power is the love of a simple soul! It makes it find at once what the groping reasoning of an uncertain genius like Tolstoy, or the too refined art of a dying civilisation, discovers after a lifetime—ages—of bitter struggle and exhausting effort! But the imperious world which was seething in Christopher had very different laws and demanded another wisdom.

For a long time he had been wanting to announce his determination to his mother. But he was fearful of the grief it would bring to her, and just as he was about to speak he would lose his courage and put it off. Two or three times he did timidly allude to his departure, but Louisa did not take him seriously: perhaps she preferred not to take him seriously, so as to persuade him that he was talking in jest. Then he dared not go on; but he would remain gloomy and thoughtful, and it was apparent that he had some secret burden upon his soul. And the poor woman, who had an intuition as to the nature of that secret, tried fearfully to delay the confession of it. Sometimes in the evening, when they were sitting, silent, in the light of the lamp, she would suddenly feel that he was going to speak, and then in terror she would begin to talk, very quickly, at random, about nothing in particular. She hardly knew what she was saying, but at all costs she must keep him from speaking. Generally her instinct made her find the best means of imposing silence on him: she would complain about her health, about the swelling of her hands and feet, and the

cramps in her legs. She would exaggerate her sickness: call herself an old, useless, bed-ridden woman. He was not deceived by her simple tricks. He would look at her sadly in dumb reproach, and after a moment he would get up, saying that he was tired, and go to bed.

But all her devices could not save Louisa for long. One evening, when she resorted to them once more, Christopher gathered his courage, and put his hand on his mother's and said:

"No, mother. I have something to say to you." Louisa was horrified, but she tried to smile and say chokingly:

"What is it, my dear?"

Christopher stammered out his intention of going. She tried to take it as a joke, and to turn the conversation as usual, but he was not to be put off, and went on so deliberately and so seriously that there was no possibility of doubt. Then she said nothing. Her pulse stopped, and she sat there dumb, frozen, looking at him with terror in her eyes. Such sorrow showed in her eyes as he spoke that he, too, stopped, and they sat, both speechless. When at last she was able to recover her breath, she said—(her lips trembled)—

"It is impossible.... It is impossible...."

Two large tears trickled down her cheeks. He turned his head away in despair, and hid his face in his hands. They wept. After some time he went to his room, and shut himself up until the morrow. They made no reference to what had happened, and as he did not speak of it again she tried to pretend that he had abandoned the project. But she lived on tenterhooks.

There came a time when he could hold himself in no longer. He had to speak, even if it broke his heart: he was suffering too much. The egotism of his sorrow mastered the idea of the suffering he would bring to her. He spoke. He went through with it, never looking at his mother, for fear of being too greatly moved. He fixed the day for his departure, so as to avoid a second discussion (he did not know if he could again win the sad courage that was in him that day). Louisa cried:

"No, no! Stop, stop!..."

He set his teeth, and went on implacably. When he had finished (she was sobbing), he took her hands and tried to make her understand how it was absolutely necessary for his

art and his life for him to go away for some time. She refused to listen. She wept and said:

"No, no! . . . I will not . . ."

After trying to reason with her in vain, he left her, thinking that the night would bring about a change in her ideas. But when they met next day at breakfast, he began once more to talk of his plans. She dropped the piece of bread she was raising to her lips, and said sorrowfully and reproachfully:

"Why do you want to torture me?"

He was touched, but he said:

"Dear mother, I must."

"No, no!" she replied. "You must not. . . . You want to hurt me. . . . It is a madness. . . ."

They tried to convince each other, but they did not listen to each other. He saw that argument was wasted: it would only make her suffer more, and he began ostentatiously to prepare for his departure.

When she saw that no entreaty would stop him, Louisa relapsed into a gloomy stupor. She spent her days locked up in her room, and without a light, when evening came. She did not speak or eat. At night he could hear her weeping. He was racked by it. He could have cried out in his grief, as he lay all night twisting and turning in his bed, sleeplessly, a prey to his remorse. He loved her so. Why must he make her suffer? . . . Alas! she would not be the only one: he saw that clearly. . . . Why had destiny given him the desire and strength of a mission which must make those whom he loved suffer?

"Ah!" he thought; "if I were free, if I were not drawn on by the cruel need of being what I must be, or else of dying in shame and disgust with myself, how happy would I make you—you whom I love! Let me live first; do, fight, suffer, and then I will come back to you and love you more than ever. How I would like only to love, love, love! . . ."

He never could have been strong enough to resist the perpetual reproach of the grief-stricken soul had that reproach been strong enough to remain silent. But Louisa, who was weak and rather talkative, could not keep the sorrow that was stifling her to herself. She told her neighbours. She told her two other sons. They could not miss such a fine opportunity of putting Christopher in the wrong. Rodolphe especially,

who had never ceased to be jealous of his elder brother, although there was little enough reason for it at the time—Rodolphe, who was cut to the quick by the least praise of Christopher, and was secretly afraid of his future success, though he never dared admit so base a thought (for he was clever enough to feel his brother's force, and to be afraid that others would feel it, too), Rodolphe was only too happy to crush Christopher beneath the weight of his superiority. He had never worried much about his mother, though he knew her straitened circumstances: although he was well able to afford to help her, he left it all to Christopher. But when he heard of Christopher's intention, he discovered at once hidden treasures of affection. He was furious at his proposing to leave his mother, and called it monstrous egotism. He was impudent enough to tell Christopher so. He lectured him loftily, like a child who deserves smacking: he told him stiffly of his duty towards his mother, and of all that she had sacrificed for him. Christopher almost burst with rage. He kicked Rodolphe out, and called him a rascal and a hypocrite. Rodolphe avenged himself by feeding his mother's indignation. Excited by him, Louisa began to persuade herself that Christopher was behaving like a bad son. She tried to declare that he had no right to go, and she was only too willing to believe it. Instead of using only her tears, which were her strongest weapon, she reproached Christopher bitterly and unjustly, and disgusted him. They said cruel things to each other: the result was that Christopher, who, till then, had been hesitating, only thought of hastening his preparations for his departure. He knew that the charitable neighbours were commiserating with his mother, and that in the opinion of the neighbourhood she was regarded as a victim and himself as a monster. He set his teeth, and would not go back on his resolve.

The days passed. Christopher and Louisa hardly spoke to each other. Instead of enjoying to the last drop their last days together, these two, who loved each other, wasted the time that was left—as too often happens—in one of those sterile fits of sullenness in which so many affections are swallowed up. They only met at meals, when they sat opposite each other, not looking at each other, never speaking, forcing themselves to eat a few mouthfuls, not so much for the sake of eating as for the sake of appearances. Christopher would contrive to

mumble a few words, but Louisa would not reply; and when she tried to talk he would be silent. This state of things was intolerable to both of them, and the longer it went on the more difficult it became to break it. Were they going to part like that? Louisa admitted that she had been unjust and awkward, but she was suffering too much to know how to win back her son's love, which she thought she had lost, and at all costs to prevent his departure, the idea of which she refused to face. Christopher stole glances at his mother's pale, swollen face, and he was torn by remorse; but he had made up his mind to go, and, knowing that he was going for ever out of her life, he wished cowardly to be gone to escape his remorse.

His departure was fixed for the next day but one. One of their sad meals had just come to an end. When they finished their supper, during which they had not spoken a word, Christopher withdrew to his room; and, sitting at his desk, with his head in his hands—he was incapable of working—he became lost in thought. The night was drawing late: it was nearly one o'clock in the morning. Suddenly he heard a noise, a chair upset in the next room. The door opened, and his mother appeared in her nightgown, barefooted, and threw her arms round his neck and sobbed. She was feverish. She kissed her son, and moaned through her despairing sobs:

"Don't go! Don't go! I implore you! I implore you! My dear, don't go! . . . I shall die. . . . I can't, I can't bear it! . . ."

He was alarmed and upset. He kissed her, and said: "Dear mother, calm yourself, please, please!"

But she went on:

"I can't bear it. . . . I have only you. If you go, what will become of me? I shall die if you go. I don't want to die away from you. I don't want to die alone. Wait until I am dead! . . ."

Her words rent his heart. He did not know what to say to console her. What arguments could hold good against such an outpouring of love and sorrow! He took her on his knees, and tried to calm her with kisses and little affectionate words. The old woman gradually became silent, and wept softly. When she was a little comforted, he said:

"Go to bed. You will catch cold."

She repeated: "Don't go!"

He said in a low voice: "I will not go."

She trembled, and took his hand. "Truly?" she said. "Truly?"

He turned his head away sadly. "Tomorrow," he answered, "I will tell you tomorrow .... Leave me now, please! ..."

She got up meekly and went back to her room. Next morning she was ashamed of her despairing outburst, which had come upon her like a madness in the middle of the night, and she was fearful of what her son would say to her. She waited for him, sitting in a corner of the room. She had taken up some knitting for occupation, but her hands refused to hold it. She let it fall. Christopher entered. They greeted each other in a whisper, without looking at each other. He was gloomy, and went and stood by the window, with his back to his mother, and he stayed without speaking. There was a great struggle in him. He knew the result of it already, and was trying to delay the issue. Louisa dared not speak a word to him, and provoke the answer which she expected and feared. She forced herself to take up her knitting again, but she could not see what she was doing, and she dropped her stitches. Outside it was raining. After a long silence Christopher came to her. She did not stir, but her heart was beating. Christopher stood still and looked at her, then, suddenly, he went down on his knees and hid his face in his mother's dress, and, without saying a word, he wept. Then she understood that he was going to stay, and her heart was filled with a mortal agony of joy—but at once she was seized by remorse, for she felt all that her son was sacrificing for her, and she began to suffer all that Christopher had suffered when it was she whom he sacrificed. She bent over him, and covered his brow and his hair with kisses. In silence their tears and their sorrow mingled. At last he raised his head, and Louisa took his face in her hands and looked into his eyes. She would have liked to say to him:

"Go!"

But she could not.

He would have liked to say to her:

"I am glad to stay."

But he could not.

The situation was hopeless; neither of them could alter it. She sighed in her sorrow and love:

"Ah! if we could all be born and all die together!" Her

simple words filled him with tenderness; he dried his tears, and tried to smile and said:

"We shall all die together."

She insisted:

"Truly you will not go?"

He got up:

"I have said so. Don't let us talk about it. There is nothing more to be said."

Christopher kept his word; he never talked of going again, but he could not help thinking of it. He stayed, but he made his mother pay dearly for his sacrifice by his sadness and bad temper. And Louisa tactlessly—much more tactlessly than she knew, never failing to do what she ought not to have done—Louisa, who knew only too well the reason of his grief, insisted on his telling her what it was. She worried him with her affection, uneasy, vexing, argumentative, reminding him every moment that they were very different from each other—and that he was trying to forget. How often he had tried to open his heart to her! But just as he was about to speak the Great Wall of China would rise between them, and he would keep his secret buried in himself. She would guess, but she never dared invite his confidence, or else she could not. When she tried, she would succeed only in flinging back on him those secrets which weighed so sorely on him, and which he was so longing to tell.

A thousand little things, harmless tricks, cut her off from him and irritated Christopher. The good old creature was doting. She had to talk about the local gossip, and she had that nurse's tenderness which will recall all the silly little things of the earliest years, and everything that is associated with the cradle. We have such difficulty in issuing from it and growing into men and women! And Juliet's nurse must for ever be laying before us our swaddling clothes, commonplace thoughts, the whole unhappy period in which the growing soul struggles against the oppression of vile matter or stifling surroundings!

And with it all she had little outbursts of touching tenderness—as though to a little child—which used to move him greatly, and he would surrender to them—like a little child.

The worst of all to bear was living from morning to night as they did, together, always together, isolated from the rest

of the world. When two people suffer, and cannot help each other's sufferings, exasperation is fatal; each in the end holds the other responsible for their suffering; and each in the end believes it. It were better to be alone; alone in suffering.

It was a daily torment for both of them. They would never have broken free if chance had not come to break the cruel indecision, against which they were struggling, in a way that seemed unfortunate—but it was really fortunate.

It was a Sunday in October. Four o'clock in the afternoon. The weather was brilliant. Christopher had stayed in his room all day, chewing the cud of melancholy.

He could bear it no longer; he wanted desperately to go out, to walk, to expend his energy, to tire himself out, so as to stop thinking.

Relations with his mother had been strained since the day before. He was just going out without saying good-bye to her; but on the stairs he thought how it would hurt her the whole evening when she was left alone. He went back, making an excuse of having left something in his room. The door of his mother's room was ajar. He put his head in through the aperture. He watched his mother for a few moments.... (What a place those two seconds were to fill in his life ever after!)....

Louisa had just come in from Vespers. She was sitting in her favourite place, the recess of the window. The wall of the house opposite, dirty white and cracked, obstructed the view, but from the corner where she sat she could see to the right through the yards of the next houses a little patch of green the size of a pocket-handkerchief. On the window-sill a pot of convolvulus climbed along its threads, and over this frail ladder stretched its tendrils, which were caressed by a ray of sunlight. Louisa was sitting in a low chair bending over her great Bible, which was open on her lap, but she was not reading. Her hands were laid flat on the book—her hands with their swollen veins, worker's nails, square and a little bent—and she was devouring with loving eyes the little plant and the patch of sky she could see through it. A sunbeam, basking on the green gold leaves, lit up her tired face, with its rather blotchy complexion, her white, soft, and rather thick hair, and her lips, parted in a smile. She was enjoying her hour of rest. It was the best moment of the week to her. She made use of it to sink

into that state so sweet to those who suffer, when thoughts dwell on nothing, and in torpor nothing speaks save the heart, and that is half asleep.

"Mother," he said, "I want to go out. I am going by Buir. I shall be rather late."

Louisa, who was dozing off, trembled a little. Then she turned her head towards him, and looked at him with her calm, kind eyes.

"Yes, my dear, go," she said. "You are right; make use of the fine weather."

She smiled at him. He smiled at her. They looked at each for a moment, then they said good night affectionately, nodding and smiling with their eyes.

He closed the door softly. She slipped back into her reverie, which her son's smile had lit up with a bright ray of light like the sunbeam on the pale leaves of the convolvulus.

So he left her—for ever.

An October evening. A pale watery sun. The drowsy country is sinking to sleep. Little village bells are slowly ringing in the silence of the fields. Columns of smoke rise slowly in the midst of the ploughed fields. A fine mist hovers in the distance. The white fogs are awaiting the coming of the night to rise.... A dog with his nose to the ground was running in circles in a field of beet. Great flocks of crows whirled against the grey sky.

Christopher went on dreaming, having no fixed object, but yet instinctively he was walking in a definite direction. For several weeks his walks round the town had gravitated, whether he liked it or not, towards another village, where he was sure to meet a pretty girl who attracted him. It was only an attraction, but it was very vivid and rather disturbing. Christopher could hardly do without loving someone; and his heart was rarely left empty; it always had some lovely image for its idol. Generally, it did not matter whether the idol knew of his love; his need was to love, the fire must never be allowed to go out; there must never be darkness in his heart.

The object of this new flame was the daughter of a peasant whom he had met, as Eliezer met Rebecca, by a well; but she did not give him to drink; she threw water in his face. She was kneeling by the edge of a stream in a hollow in the bank

between two willows, the roots of which made a sort of nest about her; she was washing linen vigorously; and her tongue was not less active than her arms; she was talking and laughing loudly with other girls of the village, who were washing opposite her on the other side of the stream. Christopher was lying in the grass a few yards away, and, with his chin resting in his hands, he watched them. They were not put out by it; they went on chattering in a style which sometimes did not lack bluntness. He hardly listened; he heard only the sound of their merry voices, mingling with the noise of their washing-pats, and with the distant lowing of the cows in the meadows, and he was dreaming, never taking his eyes off the beautiful washerwoman. A bright young face would make him glad for a whole day. It was not long before the girls made out which of them he was looking at; and they made caustic remarks to each other; the girl he preferred was not the least cutting in the observations she threw at him. As he did not budge, she got up, took a bundle of linen washed and wrung, and began to lay it out on the bushes near him, so as to have an excuse for looking at him. As she passed him she contrived to splash him with her wet clothes, and she looked at him boldly and laughed. She was thin and strong: she had a fine chin, a little underhung, a short nose, arching eyebrows, deep-set blue eyes, bold, bright, and hard, a pretty mouth, with thick lips, pouting a little, like those of a Greek mask, a mass of fair hair turned up in a knot on her head, and a full colour. She carried her head very erect, tittered at every word she said, and even when she said nothing, and walked like a man, swinging her sunburned arms. She went on laying out her linen while she looked at Christopher with a provoking smile—waiting for him to speak. Christopher stared at her, too; but he had no desire to talk to her. At last she burst out laughing in his face, and turned back towards her companions. He stayed lying where he was until evening fell, and he saw her go with her bundle on her back and her bare arms crossed, her back bent under her load, still talking and laughing.

He saw her again a few days later at the town market among heaps of carrots and tomatoes and cucumbers and cabbages. He lounged about watching the crowd of women selling, who were standing in a line by their baskets like slaves for sale. The police official went up to each of them with his satchel

and roll of tickets, receiving a piece of money and giving a paper. The coffee-seller went from row to row with a basket full of little coffee-pots; and an old nun, plump and jovial, went round the market with two large baskets on her arms, and without any sort of humility begged vegetables, or talked of the good God. The women shouted: the old scales with their green painted pans jingled and clanked with the noise of their chains; the big dogs harnessed to the little carts barked loudly, proud of their importance. In the midst of the rabble Christopher saw Rebecca. Her real name was Lorchen (Eleanor). On her fair hair she had placed a large cabbage-leaf, green and white, which made a dainty lace cap for her. She was sitting on a basket by a heap of golden onions, little pink turnips, haricot beans, and ruddy apples, and she was munching her own apples one after another without trying to sell them. She never stopped eating. From time to time she would dry her chin and wipe it with her apron, brush back her hair with her arm, rub her cheek against her shoulder, or her nose with the back of her hand. Or, with her hands on her knees, she would go on and on, throwing a handful of shelled peas from one to the other. And she would look to right and left, idly and indifferently. But she missed nothing of what was going on about her. And, without seeming to do so, she marked every glance cast in her direction. She saw Christopher. As she talked to her customers she had a way of raising her eyebrows and looking at her admirer over their heads. She was as dignified and serious as a Pope; but inwardly she was laughing at Christopher. And he deserved it; he stood there a few yards away devouring her with his eyes, then he went away without speaking to her. He had not the least desire to do so.

He came back more than once to prowl round the market, and the village where she lived. She would be about the yard of the farm; he would stop on the road to look at her. He did not admit that he came to see her, and, indeed, he did so almost unconsciously. When, as often happened, he was absorbed by the composition of some work he would be rather like a somnambulist: while his conscious soul was following its musical ideas the rest of him would be delivered up to the other unconscious soul which is for ever watching for the smallest distraction of the mind to take the freedom of the

fields. He was often bewildered by the buzzing of his musical ideas when he was face to face with her; and he would go on dreaming as he watched her. He could not have said that he loved her; he did not even think of that; it gave him pleasure to see her, nothing more. He did not take stock of the desire which was always bringing him back to her.

His insistence was remarked. The people at the farm joked about it, for they had discovered who Christopher was. But they left him in peace; for he was quite harmless. He looked silly enough in truth; but he never bothered about it.

There was a holiday in the village. Little boys were crushing crackers between stones and shouting, "God save the Emperor!" ("*Kaiser lebe! Hoch!*"). A cow shut up in the barn and the men drinking at the inn were to be heard. Kites, with long tails like comets, dipped and swung in the air above the fields. The fowls were scratching frantically in the straw and the golden dungheap; the wind blew out their feathers like the skirts of an old lady. A pink pig was sleeping voluptuously on his side in the sun.

Christopher made his way towards the red roof of the inn of the *Three Kings,* above which floated a little flag. Strings of onions hung by the door, and the windows were decorated with red and yellow flowers. He went into the saloon, filled with tobacco-smoke, where yellowing chromos hung on the walls, and in the place of honour a coloured portrait of the Emperor-King surrounded with a wreath of oak-leaves. People were dancing. Christopher was sure his charmer would be there. He sat in a corner of the room, from which he could watch the movement of the dancers undisturbed. But in spite of all his care to pass unnoticed, Lorchen spied him out in his corner. While she waltzed indefatigably she threw quick glances at him over her partner's shoulder to make sure that he was still looking at her; and it amused her to excite him; she coquetted with the young men of the village, laughing the while with her wide mouth. She talked a great deal and said silly things, and was not very different from the girls of the polite world, who think they must laugh and move about and play to the gallery when anybody looks at them, instead of keeping their foolishness to themselves. But they are not so very foolish either; for they know quite well that the gallery

only looks at them, and does not listen to what they say. With his elbows on the table and his chin in his hands Christopher watched the girl's tricks with burning, furious eyes; his mind was free enough not to be taken in by her wiles, but he was not enough himself not to be led on by them; and he growled with rage and he laughed in silence and shrugged his shoulders as he fell into the snare.

Not only the girl was watching him; Lorchen's father also had his eyes on him. Thick-set and short, bald-headed—a big head with a short nose—sunburned scalp with a fringe of hair that had been fair, and hung in thick curls like Dürer's St. John, clean-shaven, expressionless face, with a long pipe in the corner of his mouth, he was talking very deliberately to some other peasants, while all the time he was watching Christopher's pantomime out of the corner of his eye; and he laughed softly. After a moment he coughed, and a malicious light shone in his little grey eyes, and he came and sat at Christopher's table. Christopher was annoyed, and turned and scowled at him; he met the cunning look of the old man, who addressed Christopher familiarly without taking his pipe from his lips. Christopher knew him; he knew him for a common old man; but his weakness for the daughter made him indulgent towards the father, and even gave him a queer pleasure in being with him; the old rascal saw that. After talking about rain and fine weather, and some chaffing reference to the pretty girls in the room, and a remark on Christopher's not dancing, he concluded that Christopher was right not to put himself out, and that it was much better to sit at table with a mug in his hand; without ceremony he invited himself to have a drink. While he drank the old man went on talking deliberately, as always. He spoke about his affairs, the difficulty of gaining a livelihood, the bad weather, and high prices. Christopher hardly listened, and only replied with an occasional grunt; he was not interested; he was looking at Lorchen. Christopher wondered what had procured him the honour of the old man's company and confidences. At last he understood. When the old man had exhausted his compliments he passed on to another chapter; he praised the quality of his produce, his vegetables, his fowls, his eggs, his milk, and suddenly he asked if Christopher could not procure him the custom of the Palace. Christopher started.

How the devil did he know? . . . He knew him, then?

"Oh yes," said the old man. "Everything is known. . . ." He did not add:

". . . When you take the trouble to make inquiries."

But Christopher added it for him. He took a wicked pleasure in telling him that, although everything was known, "he was no doubt unaware that he had just quarrelled with the Court, and that if he had ever been able to flatter himself on having some credit with the servants' quarters and kitchens of the Palace—which he doubted strongly—that credit at present was dead and buried." The old man's lips twitched imperceptibly. However, he was not put out, and after a moment he asked if Christopher could not at least recommend him to such-and-such a family. And he mentioned all those with whom Christopher had had dealings; for he had informed himself of them at the market, and there was no danger of his forgetting any detail that might be useful to him. Christopher would have been furious at such spying upon him had he not rather wanted to laugh at the thought that the old man would be robbed in spite of all his cunning (for he had no doubt of the value of the recommendation he was asking—a recommendation more likely to make him lose his customers than to procure him fresh ones). So he let him empty all his bag of clumsy tricks, and answered neither "Yes" nor "No". But the peasant persisted, and finally he came down to Christopher and Louisa, whom he had kept for the end, and expressed his keen desire to provide them with milk, butter, and cream. He added that, as Christopher was a musician, nothing was so good for the voice as a fresh egg swallowed raw morning and evening; and he tried hard to make him let him provide him with these warm from the hen. The idea of the old peasant taking him for a singer made Christopher roar with laughter. The peasant took advantage of that to order another bottle. And then, having got all he could out of Christopher for the time being, he went away without further ceremony.

Night had fallen. The dancing had become more and more excited. Lorchen had ceased to pay any attention to Christopher; she was too busy turning the head of a young lout of the village, the son of a rich farmer, for whom all the girls were competing. Christopher was interested by the struggle;

the young women smiled at each other, and would have been only too pleased to scratch each other. Christopher forgot himself, and prayed for the triumph of Lorchen. But when her triumph was won, he felt a little downcast. He was enraged by it. He did not love Lorchen; he did not want to be loved by her; it was natural that she should love anybody she liked. No doubt. But it was not pleasant to receive so little sympathy himself when he had so much need of giving and receiving. Here, as in the town, he was alone. All these people were only interested in him while they could make use of him, and then laugh at him. He sighed, smiled as he looked at Lorchen, whom her joy in the discomfiture of her rivals had made ten times prettier than ever, and got ready to go. It was nearly nine. He had fully two miles to go to the town.

He got up from the table when the door opened, and a handful of soldiers burst in. Their entry dashed the gaiety of the place. The people began to whisper. A few couples stopped dancing to look uneasily at the new arrivals. The peasants standing near the door deliberately turned their backs on them, and began to talk among themselves; but without seeming to do so, they presently contrived to leave room for them to pass. For some time past the whole neighbourhood had been at loggerheads with the garrisons of the fortresses round it. The soldiers were bored to death, and wreaked their vengeance on the peasants. They made coarse fun of them, maltreated them, and used the women as though they were in a conquered country. The week before some of them, full of wine, had disturbed a feast at a neighbouring village, and had half killed a farmer. Christopher, who knew these things, shared the state of mind of the peasants, and he sat down again and waited to see what would happen.

The soldiers were not worried by the ill-will with which their entry was received, and went noisily and sat down at the full tables, jostling the people away from them to make room; it was the affair of a moment. Most of the people went away grumbling. An old man sitting at the end of a bench did not move quickly enough; they lifted the bench, and the old man toppled over amid roars of laughter. Christopher felt the blood rushing to his head; he got up indignantly; but, as he was on the point of interfering, he saw the old man painfully pick himself up, and, instead of complaining, humbly crave

pardon. Two of the soldiers came to Christopher's table; he watched them come, and clenched his fists. But he did not have to defend himself. They were two tall, strong, good-humoured louts, who had followed sheepishly one or two daredevils, and were trying to imitate them. They were intimidated by Christopher's defiant manner, and when he said curtly, "This place is taken," they hastily begged his pardon and withdrew to their end of the bench, so as not to disturb him. There had been a masterful inflection in his voice; their natural servility came to the fore. They saw that Christopher was not a peasant.

Christopher was a little mollified by their submission, and was able to watch things more coolly. It was not difficult to see that the gang was led by a non-commissioned officer—a little bull-dog of a man, with hard eyes—with a rascally, hypocritical, and wicked face; he was one of the heroes of the affray of the Sunday before. He was sitting at the table next to Christopher. He was drunk already, and stared at the people and threw insulting sarcasms at them which they pretended not to hear. He attacked especially the couples dancing, describing their physical advantages or defects with a coarseness of expression which made his companions laugh. The girls blushed, and tears came to their eyes; the young men ground their teeth and raged in silence. Their tormentor's eyes wandered slowly round the room, sparing nobody; Christopher saw them moving towards himself. He seized his mug, and clenched his fist on the table, and waited, determined to throw the liquor at his head on the first insult. He said to himself:

"I am mad. It would be better to go away. They will slit me up; and then, if I escape, they will put me in prison; the game is not worth the candle. I'd better go before he provokes me."

But his pride would not let him; he would not seem to be running away from such brutes as these. The officer's cunning brutal stare was fixed on him. Christopher stiffened, and glared at him angrily. The officer looked at him for a moment; Christopher's face irritated him; he nudged his neighbour, and pointed out the young man with a snigger; and he opened his lips to insult him. Christopher gathered himself together, and was just about to fling his mug at him.... Once more chance saved him. Just as the drunken man was about to speak, an

awkward couple of dancers bumped into him, and made him drop his glass. He turned furiously, and let loose a flood of insults. His attention was distracted; he forgot Christopher. Christopher waited for a few minutes longer; then, seeing that his enemy had no thought of going on with his remarks, he got up, slowly took his hat, and walked leisurely towards the door. He did not take his eyes off the bench where the other was sitting, just to let him feel that he was not giving in to him. But the officer had forgotten him altogether; no one took any notice of him.

He was just turning the handle of the door; in a few seconds he would have been outside. But it was ordered that he should not leave so soon. An angry murmur rose at the end of the room. When the soldiers had drunk they had decided to dance. And as all the girls had their cavaliers, they drove away their partners, who submitted to it. But Lorchen was not going to put up with that. It was not for nothing that she had her bold eyes and her firm chin which so charmed Christopher. She was waltzing like a mad thing when the officer, who had fixed his choice upon her, came and pulled her partner away from her. She stamped with her foot, screamed, and pushed the soldier away, declaring that she would never dance with such a boor. He pursued her. He dispersed with his fists the people behind whom she was trying to hide. At last she took refuge behind a table; and then, protected from him for a moment, she took breath to scream abuse at him; she saw that all her resistance would be useless, and she stamped with rage and groped for the most violent words to fling at him, and compared his face to that of various animals of the farmyard. He leaned towards her over the table, smiled wickedly, and his eyes glittered with rage. Suddenly he pounced and jumped over the table. He caught hold of her. She struggled with feet and fists like the lusty wench she was. He was not too steady on his legs, and almost lost his balance. In his fury he flung her against the wall, and slapped her face. He had no time to do it again; someone had jumped on his back, and was cuffing him and kicking him back into the crowd. It was Christopher, who had flung himself on him, overturning tables and people without stopping to think of what he was doing. Mad with rage, the officer turned and drew his sabre. Before he could make use of it Christopher

felled him with a stool. The whole thing had been so sudden that none of the spectators had time to think of interfering. The other soldiers ran to Christopher, drawing their sabres. The peasants flung themselves at them. The uproar became general. Mugs flew across the room; the tables were overturned. The peasants woke up; they had old scores to pay off. The men rolled about on the ground and bit each other savagely. Lorchen's partner, a stolid farmhand, had caught hold of the head of the soldier who had just insulted him, and was banging it furiously against the wall. Lorchen, armed with a cudgel, was striking out blindly. The other girls ran away screaming, except for a few wantons who joined in heartily. One of them—a fat little fair girl—seeing a gigantic soldier—the same who had sat at Christopher's table—crushing in the chest of his prostrate adversary with his knee, ran to the fire, came back, dragged the brute's head backwards, and flung a handful of burning ashes into his eyes. The man bellowed. The girl gloated, abused the disarmed enemy, whom the peasants now thwacked at their ease. At last the soldiers, finding themselves on the losing side, rushed away, leaving two of their number on the floor. The fight went on in the village street. They burst into the houses crying murder, and trying to smash everything. The peasants followed them with forks, and set their savage dogs on them. A third soldier fell with his belly cleft by a fork. The others had to fly, and were hunted out of the village, and from a distance they shouted as they ran across the fields that they would fetch their comrades and come back immediately.

The peasants, left masters of the field, returned to the inn; they were exultant; it was a revenge for all the outrages they had suffered for so long. They had as yet no thought of the consequences of the affray. They all talked at once and boasted of their prowess. They fraternised with Christopher, who was delighted to feel in touch with them. Lorchen came and took his hand, and held it for a moment in her rough paw while she giggled at him. She did not think him ridiculous for the moment.

They looked to the wounded. Among the villagers there were only a few teeth knocked out, a few ribs broken, and a few slight bruises and scars. But it was very different with the soldiers. They were seriously injured: the giant whose

eyes had been burned had had his shoulder half cut off with a hatchet; the man whose belly had been pierced was dying; and there was the officer who had been knocked down by Christopher. They were laid out by the hearth. The officer, who was the least injured of the three, had just opened his eyes. He took a long look at the ring of peasants leaning over him, a look filled with hatred. Hardly had he regained consciousness of what had happened, than he began to abuse them. He swore that he would be avenged and would settle their hash, the whole lot of them; he choked with rage; it was palpable that if he could he would exterminate them. They tried to laugh, but their laughter was forced. A young peasant shouted to the wounded man:

"Hold your gab or I'll kill you."

The officer tried to get up, and he glared at the man who had just spoken to him with blood-shot eyes:

"Swine!" he said. "Kill me! They'll cut your heads off."

He went on shouting. The man who had been ripped up screamed like a bleeding pig. The third was stiff and still like a dead man. A crushing terror came over the peasants. Lorchen and some women carried the wounded men to another room. The shouts of the officer and the screams of the dying man died away. The peasants were silent; they stood fixed in the circle as though the three bodies were still lying at their feet; they dared not budge, and looked at each other in panic. At last Lorchen's father said:

"You have done a fine piece of work!"

There was an agonised murmuring; their throats were dry. Then they began all to talk at once. At first they whispered as though they were afraid of eavesdroppers, but soon they raised their voices and became more vehement; they accused each other; they blamed each other for the blows they had struck. The dispute became acrid; they seemed to be on the point of going for each other. Lorchen's father brought them to unanimity. With his arms folded, he turned towards Christopher, and jerked his chin at him:

"And," he said, "what business had this fellow here?"

The wrath of the rabble was turned on Christopher:

"True! True!" they cried. "He began it! But for him nothing would have happened."

Christopher was amazed. He tried to reply:

"You know perfectly that what I did was for you, not for myself."

But they replied furiously:

"Aren't we capable of defending ourselves? Do you think we need a gentleman from the town to tell us what we should do? Who asked your advice? And besides, who asked you to come? Couldn't you stay at home?"

Christopher shrugged his shoulders and turned towards the door. But Lorchen's father barred the way, screaming:

"That's it! That's it!" he shouted. "He would like to cut away now after getting us all into a scrape. He shan't go!"

The peasants roared:

"He shan't go! He's the cause of it all. He shall pay for it all!"

They surrounded him and shook their fists at him. Christopher saw the circle of threatening faces closing in upon him; fear had infuriated them. He said nothing, made a face of disgust, threw his hat on the table, went and sat at the end of the room, and turned his back on them.

But Lorchen was angry, and flung herself at the peasants. Her pretty face was red and scowling with rage. She pushed back the people who were crowding round Christopher:

"Cowards! Brute beasts!" she cried. "Aren't you ashamed? You want to pretend that he brought it all on you! As if they did not see you all! As if there was a single one of you who did not hit out as hard as he could! ... If there had been a man who had stayed with his arms folded while the others were fighting, I would spit in his face and call him: Coward! Coward! ..."

The peasants, surprised by this unexpected outburst, stayed for a moment in silence; they began to shout again:

"He began it! Nothing would have happened but for him."

In vain did Lorchen's father make signs to his daughter. She went on:

"Yes. He did begin it! That is nothing for you to boast about. But for him you would have let them insult you. You would have let them insult you. You cowards! You funks!"

She abused her partner:

"And you, you said nothing. Your heart was in your mouth; you stood still to be kicked. You would have thanked them for it! Aren't you ashamed? ... Aren't you all ashamed? You are

not men! You're as brave as sheep with your noses to the ground all the time! He had to give you an example! And now you want to make him bear everything? . . . Well, I tell you, that shan't happen! He fought for us. Either you save him or you'll suffer along with him. I give you my word for it!"

Lorchen's father caught her arm. He was beside himself and shouted:

"Shut up! Shut up! . . . Will you shut up, you bitch!"

But she thrust him away and went on again. The peasants yelled. She shouted louder than they in a shrill, piercing scream:

"What have you to say to it all? Do you think I did not see you just now kicking the man who is lying half dead in the next room? And you, show me your hands! . . . There's blood on them. Do you think I did not see you with your knife? I shall tell everything I saw if you do the least thing against him. I will have you all condemned."

The infuriated peasants thrust their faces into Lorchen's and bawled at her. One of them made as though to box her ears, but Lorchen's lover seized him by the scruff of the neck, and they jostled each other, and were on the point of coming to blows. An old man said to Lorchen:

"If we are condemned, you will be too."

"I shall be too," she said, "I am not so cowardly as you."

And she burst out again.

They did not know what to do. They turned to her father:

"Can't you make her be silent?"

The old man had understood that it was not wise to push Lorchen too far. He signed to them to be calm. Silence came. Lorchen went on talking alone; then, as she found no response, like a fire without fuel, she stopped. After a moment her father coughed, and said:

"Well, then, what do you want? You don't want to ruin us."

She said:

"I want him to be saved."

They began to think. Christopher had not moved from where he sat; he was stiff and proud, and seemed not to understand that they were discussing him; but he was touched by Lorchen's intervention. Lorchen seemed not to be aware of his presence; she was leaning against the table by which he

was sitting, and glaring defiantly at the peasants, who were smoking and looking down at the ground. At last her father chewed his pipe for a little, and said:

"Whether we say anything or not—if he stays he is done for. The sergeant-major recognised him; he won't spare him. There is only one thing for him to do—to get away at once to the other side of the frontier."

He had come to the conclusion it would be better for them all if Christopher escaped; in that way he would admit his guilt, and when he was no longer there to defend himself, it would not be difficult to put upon him the burden of the affair. The others agreed. They understood each other perfectly. Now that they had come to a decision, they were all in a hurry for Christopher to go. Without being in the least embarrassed by what they had been saying a moment before, they came up to him, and pretended to be deeply interested in his welfare.

"There is not a moment to lose, sir," said Lorchen's father. "They will come back. Half an hour to go to the fortress. Half an hour to come back.... There is only just time to slip away."

Christopher had risen. He too had been thinking. He knew that if he stayed he was lost. But to go, to go without seeing his mother? ... No. It was impossible. He said that he would first go back to the town, and would still have time to go during the night and cross the frontier. But they protested loudly. They had barred the door just before to prevent his going; now they wanted to prevent his not going. If he went back to the town he was certain to be caught; they would know at the fortress before he got there; they would await him at home. He insisted. Lorchen had understood him:

"You want to see your mother? ... I will go instead of you."

"When?"

"Tonight."

"Really! You will do that?"

"I will go."

She took her shawl and put it round her head.

"Write a letter. I will take it to her. Come with me. I will give you some ink."

She took him into the inner room. At the door she turned, and addressing her lover:

"And do you get ready," she said. "You must take him. You must not leave him until you have seen him over the frontier."

He was as eager as anybody to see Christopher over into France, and farther if possible.

Lorchen went into the next room with Christopher. He was still hesitating. He was torn by grief at the thought that he would not be able to embrace his mother. When would he see her again? She was so old, so worn out, so lonely! This fresh blow would be too much for her. What would become of her without him? . . . But what would become of her if he stayed and were condemned and put in prison for years? Would not that even more certainly mean destitution and misery for her? If he were free, though far away, he could always help her, or she could come to him. He had not time to see clearly in his mind. Lorchen took his hands—she stood near him and looked at him; their faces were almost touching; she threw her arms round his neck and kissed his mouth.

"Quick! Quick!" she whispered, pointing to the table.

He gave up trying to think. He sat down. She tore a sheet of squared paper with red lines from an account book.

He wrote:

"My dear Mother:

"Forgive me. I am going to hurt you much. I cannot do otherwise. I have done nothing wrong. But now I must fly and leave the country. The girl who brings you this letter will tell you everything. I wanted to say good-bye to you. They will not let me. They say that I should be arrested. I am so unhappy that I have no will left. I am going over the frontier, but I shall stay near it until you have written to me; the girl who brings you my letter will bring me your reply. Tell me what to do. I will do whatever you say. Do you want me to come back? Tell me to come back! I cannot bear the idea of leaving you alone. What will you do to live? Forgive me! Forgive me! I love you and I kiss you . . ."

"Be quick, sir, or we shall be too late," said Lorchen's swain, pushing the door open.

Christopher wrote his name hurriedly, and gave the letter to Lorchen.

"You will give it to her yourself?"

"I am going," she said.

She was ready to go.

"To-morrow," she went on, "I will bring you her reply; you must wait for me at Leiden—(the first station beyond the German frontier)—on the platform."

(She had read Christopher's letter over his shoulder as he wrote.)

"You will tell me everything, and how she bore the blow, and everything she says to you? You will not keep anything from me?" said Christopher beseechingly.

"I will tell you everything."

They were not so free to talk now, for the young man was at the door watching them.

"And then, Herr Christopher," said Lorchen, "I will go and see her sometimes, and I will send you news of her; do not be anxious."

She shook hands with him vigorously like a man.

"Let us go!" said the peasant.

"Let us go!" said Christopher.

All three went out. On the road they parted. Lorchen went one way and Christopher, with his guide, the other. They did not speak. The crescent moon veiled in mists was disappearing behind the woods. A pale light hovered over the fields. In the hollows the mists had risen thick and milky white. The shivering trees were bathed in the moisture of the air. They were not more than a few minutes gone from the village when the peasant flung back sharply and signed to Christopher to stop. They listened. On the road in front of them they heard the regular tramp of a troop of soldiers coming towards them. The peasant climbed the hedge into the fields. Christopher followed him. They walked away across the ploughed fields. They heard the soldiers go by on the road. In the darkness the peasant shook his fist at them. Christopher's heart stopped like a hunted animal that hears the baying of the hounds. They returned to the road again, avoiding the villages and isolated farms where the barking of the dogs betrayed them to the countryside. On the slope of a wooded hill they saw in the distance the red lights of the railway. They took the direction of the signals, and decided to go to the first station. It was not easy. As they came down into the valley they plunged into the fog. They had to jump a few streams. Soon they found themselves in immense fields of beetroot and ploughed land;

they thought they would never be through. The plain was uneven; there were little rises and hollows into which they were always in danger of falling. At last, after walking blindly through the fog, they saw suddenly a few yards away the signal light of the railway at the top of an embankment. They climbed the bank. At the risk of being run over, they followed the rails until they were within a hundred yards of the station; then they took to the road again. They reached the station twenty minutes before the train went. In spite of Lorchen's orders, the peasant left Christopher; he was in a hurry to go back to see what had happened to the others and to his own property.

Christopher took a ticket for Leiden, and waited alone in the empty third-class waiting-room. An official who was asleep on a seat came and looked at Christopher's ticket, and opened the door for him when the train came in. There was nobody in the carriage. Everybody in the train was asleep. In the fields all was asleep. Only Christopher did not sleep in spite of his weariness. As the heavy iron wheels approached the frontier, he felt a fearful longing to be out of reach. In an hour he would be free. But till then a word would be enough to have him arrested.... Arrested! His whole being revolted at the word. To be stifled by odious force!... He could not breathe. His mother, his country, that he was leaving, were no longer in his thoughts. In the egotism of his threatened liberty he thought only of that liberty, of his life which he wished to save. Whatever it might cost! Even at the cost of crime. He was bitterly sorry that he had taken the train instead of continuing the journey to the frontier on foot. He had wanted to gain a few hours. A fine gain! He was throwing himself into the jaws of the wolf. Surely they were waiting for him at the frontier station; orders must have been given; he would be arrested.... He thought for a moment of leaving the train while it was moving, before it reached the station; he even opened the door of the carriage, but it was too late; the train was at the station. It stopped. Five minutes. An eternity. Christopher withdrew to the end of the compartment, and hid behind the curtain, and anxiously watched the platform, on which a gendarme was standing motionless. The station-master came out of his office with a telegram in his hand, and went hurriedly up to the gendarme. Christopher had no doubt

that it was about himself. He looked for a weapon. He had only a strong knife with two blades. He opened it in his pocket. An official with a lamp on his chest had passed the station-master, and was running along the train. Christopher saw him coming. His fist closed on the handle of the knife in his pocket, and he thought:

"I am lost."

He was in such a state of excitement that he would have been capable of plunging the knife into the man's breast if he had been unfortunate enough to come straight to him and open his compartment. But the official stopped at the next carriage to look at the ticket of a passenger, who had just taken his seat. The train moved on again. Christopher repressed the throbbing of his heart. He did not stir. He dared hardly say to himself that he was saved. He would not say it until he had crossed the frontier.... Day was beginning to dawn. The silhouettes of the trees were starting out of the night. A carriage was passing on the road like a fantastic shadow with the jingle of bells and a winking eye.... With his face close-pressed to the window Christopher tried to see the post with the Imperial arms which marked the bounds of his servitude. He was still looking for it in the growing light, when the train whistled to announce its arrival at the first Belgian station.

He got up, opened the door wide, and drank in the icy air. Free! His whole life before him! The joy of life!... And at once there came upon him suddenly all the sadness of what he was leaving, all the sadness of what he was going to meet; and he was overwhelmed by the fatigue of that night of emotion. He sank down on the seat. He had hardly been in the station a minute. When a minute later an official opened the door of the carriage, he found Christopher asleep. Christopher awoke, dazed, thinking he had been asleep an hour; he got out heavily, and dragged himself to the customs, and when he was definitely accepted on foreign territory, having no more to defend himself, he lay down along a seat in the waiting-room, and dropped off and slept like a log.

He awoke about noon. Lorchen could hardly come before two or three o'clock. While he was waiting for the train, he walked up and down the platform of the little station. Then he went straight on into the middle of the fields. It was a grey

and joyless day, giving warning of the approach of winter. The light was dim. The plaintive whistle of a train stopping was all that broke the melancholy silence. Christopher stopped a few yards away from the frontier in the deserted country. Before him was a little pond, a clear pool of water, in which the gloomy sky was reflected. It was enclosed by a fence, and two trees grew by its side. On the right, a poplar with leafless trembling top. Behind, a great walnut tree with black, naked branches like a monstrous polypus. The black fruit of it swung heavily on it. The last withered leaves were decaying and falling one by one upon the still pond. . . .

It seemed to him that he had already seen them, the two trees, the pond . . . —and suddenly he had one of those moments of giddiness which open great distances in the plain of life. A chasm in Time. He knew not where he was, who he was, in what age he lived, through how many ages he had been so. Christopher had a feeling that it had already been, that what was, now, was not, now, but in some other time: He was no longer himself. He was able to see himself from outside, from a great distance, as though it were some one else standing there in that place. He heard the buzzing of memory and of an unknown creature within himself; the blood boiled in his veins and roared:

"Thus . . . Thus . . . Thus . . ."

The centuries whirled through him . . . Many other Kraffts had passed through the experiences which were his on that day, and had tasted the wretchedness of the last hour on their native soil. A wandering race, banished everywhere for their independence and disturbing qualities. A race always the prey of an inner demon that never let it settle anywhere. A race attached to the soil from which it was torn, and never, never ceasing to love it.

Christopher in his turn was passing through these same sorrowful experiences; and he was finding on the way the footsteps of those who had gone before him. With tears in his eyes he watched his native land disappear in the mist, his country to which he had to say farewell. Had he not ardently desired to leave it? Yes; but now that he was actually leaving it he felt himself racked by anguish. Only a brutish heart can part without emotion from the motherland. Happy or unhappy, he had lived with her; she was his mother and his com-

rade; he had slept in her, he had slept on her bosom, he was impregnated with her; in her bosom she held the treasure of his dreams, all his past life, the sacred dust of those whom he had loved. Christopher saw now in review the days of his life, and the dear men and women whom he was leaving on that soil or beneath it. His sufferings were not less dear to him than his joys. Minna, Sabine, Ada, his grandfather, Uncle Gottfried, old Schulz—all passed before him in the space of a few minutes. He could not tear himself away from the dead—(for he counted Ada also among the dead)—the idea of his mother whom he was leaving, the only living creature of all those whom he loved, among these phantoms, was intolerable to him.

He was almost on the point of crossing the frontier again, so cowardly did his flight seem to him. He made up his mind that if the answer Lorchen was to bring him from his mother betrayed too great grief, he would return at all costs. But if he received nothing? If Lorchen had not been able to reach Louisa, or to bring back the answer? Well, he would go back.

He returned to the station. After a grim time of waiting the train at last appeared. Christopher expected to see Lorchen's bold face in the train; for he was sure she would keep her promise; but she did not appear. He ran anxiously from one compartment to another; he said to himself that if she had been in the train she would have been one of the first to get out. As he was plunging through the stream of passengers coming from the opposite direction, he saw a face which he seemed to know. It was the face of a little girl of thirteen or fourteen, chubby, dimpled, and ruddy as an apple, with a little turned-up nose and a large mouth, and a thick plait coiled around her head. As he looked more closely at her, he saw that she had in her hand an old suitcase very much like his own. She was watching him too like a sparrow; and when she saw that he was looking at her she came towards him; but she stood firmly in front of Christopher, and stared at him with her little mouse-like eyes, without speaking a word. Christopher knew her; she was a little milkmaid at Lorchen's farm. Pointing to the suitcase, he said:

"That is mine, isn't it?"

The girl did not move, and replied cunningly:

"I'm not sure. Where do you come from, first of all?"

"Buir."

"And who sent it you?"

"Lorchen. Come. Give it me."

The little girl held out the suitcase.

"There it is."

And she added:

"Oh! But I knew you at once!"

"What were you waiting for then?"

"I was waiting for you to tell me that it was you."

"And Lorchen?" asked Christopher. "Why didn't she come?"

The girl did not reply. Christopher understood that she did not want to say anything among all the people. They had first to pass through the customs. When that was done Christopher took the girl to the end of the platform.

"The police came," said the girl, now very talkative. "They came almost as soon as you had gone. They went into all the houses. They questioned everybody, and they arrested big Sami, and Christian, and old Kaspar. And also Mélanie and Gertrude, though they declared they had done nothing, and they wept; and Gertrude scratched the gendarmes. It was not any good them saying that you had done it all."

"I?" exclaimed Christopher.

"Oh! yes," said the girl quietly. "It was no good as you had gone. Then they looked for you everywhere, and hunted for you in every direction."

"And Lorchen?"

"Lorchen was not there. She came back afterwards—after she had been to the town."

"Did she see my mother?"

"Yes. Here is the letter. And she wanted to come herself, but she was arrested too."

"How did you manage to come?"

"Well, she came back to the village without being seen by the police, and she was going to set out again. But Irmina, Gertrude's sister, denounced her. They came to arrest her. Then when she saw the gendarmes coming she went up to her room, and shouted that she would come down in a minute, that she was dressing. I was in the vineyard behind the house; she called to me from the window: 'Lydia! Lydia!' I went to her; she threw down your suitcase and the letter which your mother

had given her, and she explained where I should find you. I ran, and here I am."

"Didn't she say anything more?"

"Yes. She told me to give you this shawl to show you that I came from her."

Christopher recognised the white shawl with red spots and embroidered flowers which Lorchen had tied round her head when she left him on the night before. The naïve improbability of the excuse she had made for sending him such a love-token did not make him smile.

"Now," said the girl, "here is the return train. I must go home. Godd night."

"Wait," said Christopher. "And the fare, what did you do about that?"

"Lorchen gave it me."

"Take this," said Christopher, pressing a few pieces of money into her hand.

He held her back as she was trying to go.

"And then . . ." he said.

He stopped and kissed her cheeks. The girl affected to protest.

"Don't mind," said Christopher jokingly. "It was not for you."

"Oh! I know that," said the girl mockingly. "It was for Lorchen."

It was not only Lorchen that Christopher kissed as he kissed the little milkmaid's chubby cheeks; it was all Germany.

The girl slipped away and ran towards the train which was just going. She hung out of the window and waved her handkerchief to him until she was out of sight. He followed with his eyes the rustic messenger who had brought him for the last time the breath of his country and of those he loved.

When she had gone he found himself utterly alone, this time, a stranger in a strange land. He had in his hand his mother's letter and the shawl love-token. He pressed the shawl to his breast, and tried to open the letter. But his hands trembled. What would he find in it? What suffering would be written in it?—No; he could not bear the sorrowful words of reproach which already he seemed to hear; he would retrace his steps.

At last he unfolded the letter and read: "My poor child, do

not be anxious about me. I will be wise. God has punished me. I must not be selfish and keep you here. Go to Paris. Perhaps it will be better for you. Do not worry about me. I can manage somehow. The chief thing is that you should be happy. I kiss you.

"MOTHER.

"Write to me when you can."

Christopher sat down on his suitcase and wept.

The porter was shouting the train for Paris.

The heavy train was slowing down with a terrific noise. Christopher dried his tears, got up, and said:

"I must go."

He looked at the sky in the direction in which Paris must be. The sky, dark everywhere, was even darker there. It was like a dark chasm. Christopher's heart ached, but he said again:

"I must go."

He climbed into the train and, leaning out of the window, went on looking at the menacing horizon.

"Oh, Paris!" he thought, "Paris! Come to my aid! Save me! Save my thoughts!"

The thick fog grew denser still. Behind Christopher, above the country he was leaving, a little patch of sky, pale blue, gazing like two eyes—like the eyes of Sabine—smiled sorrowfully through the heavy veil of clouds, and then was gone. The train went on. Rain fell. Night fell.

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